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Examining Customer Felt Gratitude and Indebtedness in Exchanges: Their Conceptualizations, Causes and Consequences

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EXAMINING CUSTOMER FELT GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS
IN EXCHANGES: THEIR CONCEPTUALIZATIONS, CAUSES AND
CONSEQUENCES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor in Philosophy

in

The Interdepartmental Program in Business Administration (Marketing)

by
Dora E. Schmit
B.S. University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, 2006
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
ESSAY ONE: EXPLORING THE EXISTENCE OF CUSTOMER FELT GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS IN EXCHANGES.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND.....	2
Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Emotions.....	3
MOTIVATION.....	5
Issue One: Ill-defined Gratitude and Indebtedness Concepts.....	5
Gratitude.....	5
Indebtedness.....	6
Gratitude Versus Indebtedness.....	6
Issue Two: Problematic Measures.....	7
Issue Three: Unresolved Antecedents and Consequences.....	7
Antecedents.....	7
Consequences.....	9
Issue Four: Relationship Marketing and Emotions.....	10
METHODOLOGY.....	10
Sample.....	11
Literature Review.....	11
Interview Preparation.....	13
Interview Execution.....	14
Textual Analysis.....	14
Summary.....	15
RESULTS.....	16
Conceptualization Themes.....	16
A Priori Themes – Gratitude Conceptualization.....	17
Emergent Themes – Gratitude Conceptualization	17
A Priori Themes – Indebtedness Conceptualization	18
Emergent Themes – Indebtedness Conceptualization	20
Summary.....	21
Antecedent Themes.....	21
A Priori Themes – Antecedents of Gratitude.....	21
Emergent Theme – Antecedents of Gratitude.....	27
A Priori Themes – Antecedents of Indebtedness.....	27
Emergent Themes – Antecedents of Indebtedness.....	28
Inconsistencies in A Priori Antecedent Themes.....	30
Summary.....	31
Consequence Themes.....	31
A Priori Themes – Consequences of Gratitude.....	35
Emergent Themes - Consequences of Gratitude.....	37
A Priori Themes – Consequences of Indebtedness.....	38

Inconsistencies in A Priori Consequence Themes.....	39
Summary.....	41
Conceptual Framework.....	42
DISCUSSION.....	43
Theoretical Contributions.....	43
Issue One: Ill-Defined Conceptualizations.....	43
Issue Two: Problematic Measures.....	45
Issue Three: Unresolved Antecedents and Consequences.....	45
Issue Four: Relationship Marketing and Emotions.....	46
Managerial Contributions.....	46
Retailing, Services and Sales.....	46
Relationship Marketing.....	47
Customer Helping Behavior.....	47
CONCLUSION.....	48
ESSAY TWO: DEVELOPING CUSTOMER FELT GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS	
SCALES.....	49
INTRODUCTION.....	49
BACKGROUND.....	50
Limitations of Existing Gratitude and Indebtedness Scales.....	51
Dimensions of Gratitude and Indebtedness.....	51
METHODOLOGY.....	52
Study 1: Expert Judge Review.....	52
Study 2: Exploratory Analysis—Item Reduction and Dimensionality of the Scales.....	52
Procedures.....	53
Results.....	53
Study 3: Confirmatory Analyses to Assess Psychometric Properties.....	55
Hypotheses: Antecedents of Gratitude and Indebtedness.....	56
Gratitude.....	57
Indebtedness.....	58
Sample, Procedures and Measures.....	58
Results.....	59
Gratitude Results.....	60
Issue 1: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the	
Gratitude Model and Distinguishing Gratitude from Pride and	
Happiness.....	60
Issue 2: Examining the Dimensionality and Psychometric Properties of the	
Gratitude Items.....	62
Issue 3: Comparing the Developed and Prior Measure of Gratitude.....	63
Issue 4: Classifying Antecedents as Supportive According to the Threat to	
Self-Esteem Model.....	63
Issue 5: Identifying the Antecedents of Gratitude.....	64
Indebtedness Results.....	65
Issue 6: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the	
Indebtedness Model.....	65

Issue 7: Examining the Dimensionality and Psychometric Properties of the Indebtedness Items.....	66
Issue 8: Classifying Antecedents as Threatening According to the Threat to Self-Esteem Model.....	67
Issue 9: Identifying the Antecedents of Indebtedness.....	68
Summary of the Findings.....	68
Study 4: Confirmatory Analyses to Finalize the Scale and Assess the Causes of Gratitude and Indebtedness in Marketing Exchanges.....	68
Sample, Procedures and Measures.....	69
Manipulation Checks.....	70
Threat to Self-Esteem Checks.....	70
Results.....	71
Gratitude Results.....	71
Issue 1: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the Gratitude Model.....	71
Issue 2: Finalizing the Gratitude Scale.....	73
Issue 3: Comparing the Developed and Prior Measure of Gratitude.....	74
Issue 4: Distinguishing Gratitude from Indebtedness.....	75
Issue 5: Distinguishing Gratitude from Delight.....	76
Issue 6: Classifying Antecedents as Supportive According to the Threat to Self-Esteem Model.....	76
Issue 7: Identifying the Antecedents of Gratitude.....	77
Indebtedness Results.....	78
Issue 8: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the Indebtedness Model.....	78
Issue 9: Finalizing the Indebtedness Scale.....	80
Issue 10: Comparing the Developed and Prior Measure of Indebtedness.....	81
Issue 11: Classifying Antecedents as Threatening According to the Threat to Self-Esteem Model.....	82
Issue 12: Identifying the Antecedents of Indebtedness.....	82
Summary of the Findings.....	83
DISCUSSION.....	83
Theoretical Contributions.....	84
Managerial Contributions.....	84
CONCLUSION.....	85
 ESSAY THREE: GRATITUDE VERSUS INDEBTEDNESS: DIFFERENCES IN EXCHANGE OUTCOMES.....	86
INTRODUCTION.....	86
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	87
Supportive Elements in Helping Encounters.....	88
Customization.....	90
Extra-Role Behavior.....	90
Benevolent Intentions.....	91
Threatening Elements in Helping Encounters.....	92
Excessive Customization and Extra-Role Behavior.....	92

Consumer Norm Violation.....	93
Mutual Intentions.....	93
Mediating Effects.....	93
Gratitude.....	94
Indebtedness.....	94
Moderating Effects.....	95
Relationship Quality.....	95
Personality Traits.....	96
Gratitude.....	96
Neuroticism.....	96
Agreeableness.....	97
METHODOLOGY.....	97
Study 1.....	98
Sample, Procedures and Measures.....	98
Results.....	98
Gratitude Results.....	99
Issue 1: Gratitude Measurement Model.....	99
Issue 2: Gratitude Structural Model.....	101
Indebtedness Results.....	102
Issue 3: Indebtedness Measurement Model.....	103
Issue 4: Indebtedness Structural Model.....	105
Summary of Study 1 Results.....	105
Study 2.....	105
Sample, Procedures and Measures.....	106
Results.....	106
Gratitude Results.....	107
Issue 1: Gratitude Measurement Model.....	109
Issue 2: Examining Direct Effects—H1-H3.....	109
Issue 3: Examining Gratitude as Mediator—H8-H10.....	110
Issue 4: Examining Relationship Quality, Trait Gratitude, Neuroticism and Agreeableness as Moderators—H15, 17, 19 and 21.....	111
Issue 5: Verifying the Model Represents Gratitude.....	113
Indebtedness Results.....	113
Issue 6: Indebtedness Measurement Model.....	114
Issue 7: Examining Direct Effects—H4-H7.....	116
Issue 8: Examining Indebtedness as Mediator—H11-H14.....	116
Issue 9: Examining Relationship Quality, Trait Gratitude, Neuroticism and Agreeableness as Moderators—H16, 18, 20 and 22.....	117
Issue 10: Verifying the Model Represents Indebtedness.....	118
Summary of Study 2 Results.....	118
DISCUSSION.....	119
Theoretical Contributions.....	119
Managerial Contributions.....	121
CONCLUSION.....	121
REFERENCES.....	123

APPENDIX A: EMOTIONS EXAMINED IN JCR, JMR, AND JM FROM 2000-2010.....	138
APPENDIX B: KEY COMPONENTS OF GRATITUDE DEFINITIONS.....	140
APPENDIX C: PSYCHOLOGY MEASURES OF GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS...	147
APPENDIX D: MARKETING MEASURES OF GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS.....	148
APPENDIX E: THREAT TO SELF-ESTEEM MODEL.....	149
APPENDIX F: EXPERT JUDGE REVIEW FORM.....	150
APPENDIX G: GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS ITEMS INCLUDED IN STUDIES...	160
APPENDIX H: SCENARIOS USED IN ESSAY TWO STUDIES 2 AND 3.....	165
APPENDIX I: EIGHT FACTOR SOLUTION OF GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS ITEMS.....	166
APPENDIX J: FACTOR ANALYSIS OF INDEBTEDNESS COGNITIONS AND BEHAVIOR ITEMS.....	168
APPENDIX K: ANTECEDENTS AND OTHER CONSTRUCTS MEASURED IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 2.....	169
APPENDIX L: TESTS OF DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY FOR THE GRATITUDE MEASUREMENT MODEL IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 3.....	171
APPENDIX M: CORRELATIONS OF CONSTRUCTS IN THE GRATITUDE MEASUREMENT MODEL IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 3.....	172
APPENDIX N: TESTS OF DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY FOR THE INDEBTEDNESS MEASUREMENT MODEL IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 3.....	173
APPENDIX O: CORRELATIONS OF CONSTRUCTS IN THE INDEBTEDNESS MEASUREMENT MODEL IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 3.....	174
APPENDIX P: CORRELATIONS FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 1 GRATITUDE MEASUREMENT MODEL.....	175
APPENDIX Q: CORRELATIONS FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 1 INDEBTEDNESS MEASUREMENT MODEL	176
APPENDIX R: STANDARDIZED PATH ESTIMATES FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 1 INDEBTEDNESS STRUCTURAL MODEL	178

APPENDIX S: MEDIATION RESULTS FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 2.....	180
VITA.....	185

ABSTRACT

Although gratitude has been termed the second most frequently experienced positive emotion (Fredrickson 2009), marketing research has only recently started to explore the role of gratitude in customer relationships. As a result, many deficiencies exist in the literature, including the distinction between this emotion and indebtedness. Further and related to this issue, little is known about gratitude's conceptualization, antecedents and consequences. This dissertation was conducted to address these deficiencies and extend knowledge concerning customer felt gratitude and indebtedness.

Essay one was conducted to offer in-depth insight to the conceptualizations of customer felt gratitude and indebtedness. A hermeneutical interpretive approach was used to interpret the data. The results revealed themes pertinent to understanding the unique conceptualizations, antecedents and consequences of gratitude and indebtedness. Gratitude and indebtedness were found to differ across four dimensions, including affect, behavior, cognition and duration. Different antecedents and consequences also emerged for these two emotions, as well.

Essay two was conducted to develop comprehensive measures of gratitude and indebtedness and to use these measures to identify the causes of each construct. The results revealed that gratitude is a multidimensional construct consisting of affect, behavior and cognitive dimensions. Indebtedness is also a multidimensional construct consisting of affect, behavior and cognitive dimensions, but also includes a duration dimension. Moreover, four studies led to the creation of a fifteen item measure of gratitude and a nineteen item measure of indebtedness. In addition, different antecedents of gratitude and indebtedness were identified.

Essay three was conducted to further our understanding of the consequences of gratitude and indebtedness and to position these concepts into a nomological model of relationship marketing through applying the threat to self-esteem theory. The results indicated that gratitude and indebtedness have different effects on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment.

This research offers theoretical contributions by demonstrating the difference between gratitude and indebtedness, offering comprehensive scales of each emotion and applying the threat to self-esteem theory to marketing constructs. This research offers managers an understanding of the employee behaviors that generate these emotions and demonstrates how customer gratitude produces positive and indebtedness produces negative effects on valuable outcomes.

ESSAY ONE: EXPLORING THE EXISTENCE OF CUSTOMER FELT GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS IN EXCHANGES

INTRODUCTION

In all types of exchanges, consumers frequently experience gratitude and indebtedness. These emotions are similar, in the sense that both emotions result from a recipient recognizing that someone did something for his/her benefit. Gratitude and indebtedness have significant implications because both have been shown to impact reciprocal intentions (Greenberg 1980; McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, and Larson 2001; Watkins et al. 2006), which is a key construct in relationship marketing research and practice (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff, and Kardes 2009). Given this association to reciprocity, further examining and enhancing our knowledge of these emotions in marketing exchanges is a valuable and worthy topic in marketing research.

Without any doubt, consumers and organizations often feel and express gratitude. In fact, gratitude has been claimed to be the second most frequently felt positive emotion (Fredrickson 2009), yet little research has given attention to this construct. In addition, the negligible marketing research that examines gratitude often inaccurately considers this emotion as being identical to indebtedness. While gratitude and indebtedness both influence reciprocal behavior, recent research in psychology suggests that these two emotions are different; such that gratitude and indebtedness have contrasting conceptualizations, antecedents and consequences. Altogether, considering these aforementioned issues, a large gap in the literature exists in regard to understanding gratitude and indebtedness and the unique role of each emotion in marketing exchanges.

The primary goal of this essay is to enhance the limited existing knowledge of gratitude and indebtedness through identifying their fundamental differences and acknowledging the role these emotions play in marketing exchanges. With this goal in mind, this essay aims to develop a conceptual model of gratitude and indebtedness that is applicable to examining these emotions in several areas of marketing. Particularly, the developed model may be applicable for use when studying customer-service provider relationships, business-to-business sales, service recovery, retailing contexts, and inter and intra-firm relationships. In agreement with these objectives, this essay possesses three additional goals, to: 1) Conceptualize, differentiate and detail the relevance of gratitude and indebtedness; 2) Develop a nomological model for the study of gratitude and indebtedness in marketing, incorporating the causes and effects of these emotions, in addition to moderating constructs; and 3) Highlight the significance of gratitude and indebtedness for marketing practitioners and researchers. In particular, this research attends to the subsequent research questions:

1. What is gratitude? Is gratitude different than indebtedness? If yes, then how so?
2. Is gratitude and indebtedness, as defined in the psychology literature, reflective of the gratitude and indebtedness that individual's experience in a marketing exchange context?
3. What are the unique and common antecedents of gratitude and indebtedness?

4. Can gratitude be elicited by constraining opportunistic behavior and/or going above and beyond?
5. What are the consequences of these two emotions? How does each emotion influence individuals' affect, behavior and cognitions?
6. Are the consequences of each emotion dictated by relationship stage or relationship type?
7. What managerial and theoretical implications can be drawn from studying gratitude and indebtedness?

Due to the limited understanding of gratitude and indebtedness, and that the primary objective was to further knowledge of these emotions, a qualitative study was deemed appropriate. Particularly, data was attained by conducting ten phenomenological interviews. Phenomenological interviews, often considered in-depth interviews, are interviews that aim to understand individuals' lived experiences. The interview procedures and textual analysis were consistent with grounded theory methodology and occurred through an iterative hermeneutical approach. Grounded theory methods provide a means to collecting and analyzing qualitative data to develop theories grounded in the data themselves; therefore the data gained from the phenomenological interviews shaped the basis of the theory and constructs evident in the research (Charmaz 2006).

Through advancing the discipline's understanding of gratitude and indebtedness, including the conceptualizations, causes and consequences of each emotion, this essay provides a substantial contribution for all disciplines examining these emotions. Moreover, this is the first marketing research to systematically and simultaneously examine these emotions in exchanges, and as a result, offers several implications for researchers and practitioners in marketing.

This essay continues in the following manner. First, a background section provides an summary of emotions, discusses how emotions impact important outcomes in marketing and illustrates how emotions occur in all types of exchanges. The background section then transitions into detailing the cognitive appraisal theory of emotion and differentiating gratitude and indebtedness from other emotions. Next, the motivation section presents four fundamental deficiencies concerning gratitude and indebtedness research in marketing and psychology; these issues stimulate the current research. Subsequently, the methodology is explained, along with the results of the research. The essay concludes by discussing the research contributions.

BACKGROUND

Emotions, defined as "a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts" (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999, p. 184), are commonly researched in marketing and influence variables of interest for both marketing academics and practitioners. For example, marketing researchers have heavily studied emotions in advertising (Aaker and Williams 1998), and the effect of emotions on attention (Olney, Holbrook, and Batra 1991), brand and advertisement recall (Friestad and Thorson 1993), and attitudes (Edell and Burke

1987). Marketing researchers have also examined how a consumer's emotional state affect cognitive processes such as encoding and retrieval of the information (Bower and Cohen 1982; Isen, Shalker, Clark, and Karp 1978), strategies used to process information (Isen and Daubman 1984), evaluations and judgments (Clore and Byrne 1974) and creative thinking (Isen, Daubman and Nowicki 1987). Lastly, and highly relevant to the proposed research, is that marketing researchers have also examined how emotions affect consumer volitions, goal directed behavior, consumer decisions to help (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters 1998; Bagozzi and Moore 1994; Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999), purchase and word-of-mouth intentions (Nyer 1997a; Nyer 1997b).

In any exchange, there is potential for individuals to experience various emotions based on the perceived equity of the exchange. For instance, an individual may feel contentment when he/she perceives that both exchange parties receive equal benefits. Likewise, an individual may feel angry when he/she perceives that the other party reaped greater benefits than themselves. Lastly, when a person perceives that he/she personally benefited more than the other party, depending on how he/she interprets the outcome, the person may feel grateful, indebted, pride or guilt. Typically, pride or guilt is experienced when an individual attributes their benefits to be due to themselves (Roseman, Spindel, and Jose 1990); but when an individual perceives their benefits to be due to the other exchange party, the person can experience gratitude or indebtedness (See Table 1); and it is these latter emotions that this dissertation proposes to address. Therefore, it is an underlying assumption of this research that gratitude or indebtedness is experienced in situations where individuals intend to reciprocate as a result of receiving greater benefits relative to the other party, and these benefits are attributed to the other party. Therefore, the current research does not address inequitable situations in which the consumer attributes the inequity to the self.

Table 1: Potential Emotions in Exchanges

Equity Situation	Equal Benefits Shared	Other Party Benefits > Customer Benefits	Other Party Benefits < Customer Benefits			
Attribution of Outcome			Self		Other	
Emotion Elicited			Pride	Guilt	Gratitude	Indebtedness

Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Emotions

Appraisal theorists (Ellsworth and Smith 1988; Lazarus 1991; Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988; Roseman, Spindel, and Jose 1990) argue that emotions arise as a result of an individual's evaluations and interpretations of events (i.e. outcomes or situations). Emotions are considered to be adaptive responses to environmental demands (Ellsworth and Smith 1988). Thus, whether individuals experience the same or different emotions is contingent upon how the individuals interpret the event. Although the exact pattern or temporal order to the appraisals varies with different theorists, the basic premises of appraisals leading to certain emotions remain constant throughout the numerous theories (Lazarus 1991).

One appraisal that remains consistent across theorists and is particularly relevant to the proposed research on gratitude and indebtedness is that of agency—“whether an outcome is caused by impersonal circumstances, some other person, or the self” (Roseman, Spindel, and Jose 1990 p. 899). Note that the name assigned to this appraisal varies across researchers but the meaning of the appraisal is similar. For instance, Lazarus (1996, p. 93) describes a secondary appraisal of understanding “who is responsible for the threat, harm, or benefit.” Likewise, Ellsworth and Smith (1988) term this appraisal as agency—interpreting the situation as being caused by oneself, someone else, or impersonal circumstances. Notice that the only difference between Ellsworth and Smith’s (1988) and Roseman, Spindel and Jose’s (1990) definition of this appraisal is the presence of situation or outcome.

Individuals are likely to feel pride, guilt, gratitude or indebtedness from exchanges where they receive greater benefits than the other party, and these emotions are based on appraisals. According to cognitive appraisal theory of emotions, pride and guilt are both considered to be appraised as self-agency whereas gratitude and indebtedness are appraised as other-agency. Pride and guilt typically arise from an appraisal that the outcome of the exchange was caused by the self (Roseman, Spindel, and Jose 1990). For instance, consumers may view themselves as “smart shoppers” when they take pride in their decision making abilities (Burton et al. 1998), and perceive that the benefit received was a result of their own actions. Consumers may feel guilty when they believe they received undeserved merit; or they reaped more than they deserved (Tracy, Robins, and Tangney 2007). Contrarily, consumers may feel gratitude or indebtedness when they perceive that the benefit received was a result of the other party in the exchange (e.g. service provider, front line employee); however, the valence of the emotions differ. Typically, gratitude is considered a positive emotion, while indebtedness is considered a negative emotion (Watkins et al. 2006) (See Table 2).

Table 2: Different Emotions Due to Agency Appraisal

	Self-Agency	Other-Agency
Positive Emotion	Pride	Gratitude
Negative Emotion	Guilt	Indebtedness

By examining the last ten years (2000-2010) of marketing research published in the three leading marketing journals (Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Consumer Research, and Journal of Marketing), the most commonly studied emotions include joy/happiness, pride, guilt and regret (See Appendix A). Only two articles (Morales 2005; Palmatier et al. 2009) have examined customer felt gratitude and demonstrated gratitude’s significant influence on marketing related variables (e.g. share of wallet, purchase intent, sales growth). To the best of the author’s knowledge, when looking at the history of marketing research on gratitude published in top tier journals, the first published piece on gratitude occurred in 2005; and to date, four papers have now been published in common marketing journals regarding the role of gratitude in marketing phenomena (Morales 2005; Palmatier et al. 2009; Raggio and Folse 2009; Soscia 2007). Thus, the research on gratitude is gaining attention in marketing; however the literature is still sparse.

MOTIVATION

Even though research on gratitude is growing in both psychology and marketing, there are several fundamental deficiencies in the literature. First, gratitude and indebtedness are ill-defined across psychology and marketing disciplines. In fact, marketing equates gratitude as being synonymous to indebtedness; yet recent research in psychology suggests differences between the two emotions (Tsang 2006b; Watkins et al. 2006). Second, measures of gratitude and indebtedness are problematic. Particularly, as a result of the conceptual issues surrounding these two emotions, marketing summates measures of gratitude and indebtedness into one overarching construct. Third, there are several unresolved issues associated with the antecedents and consequences of gratitude and indebtedness. Specifically, several conflicting findings can be noted; limited constructs have been investigated as possible antecedents or consequences; there is limited empirical validation of proposed antecedents and consequences; and considering the conceptual and measurement issues associated with gratitude and indebtedness, there raises validity concerns as to whether the researched antecedents or consequences truly reflect gratitude or indebtedness. Lastly, reciprocity is the common theoretical foundation of relationship marketing; however, limited research has examined the psychological mechanisms (i.e. emotions) that possibly underlie reciprocity-based behaviors (Palmatier et al. 2009). These four issues will be detailed in the following section.

Issue One: Ill-Defined Gratitude and Indebtedness Concepts

The first fundamental deficiency in the gratitude and indebtedness literature is that there is no consensus regarding the conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness. The following section will illuminate this issue after first describing what research has concluded about the definitions of gratitude and indebtedness.

Gratitude

Gratitude has been conceptualized as an emotion, a moral affect, a virtue, and a disposition (Emmons and McCullough 2003; Emmons and McCullough 2004). Although conceptualized in various ways, a general consensus across disciplines is that gratitude is emotion, and the negligible marketing research on gratitude has only studied the construct as an emotion (Morales 2005; Palmatier et al. 2009; Raggio and Folse 2009; Soscia 2007). Thus, the proposed research further attempts to understand gratitude as an emotion.

Notably, gratitude is not an uncommon emotion. Fredrickson (2009) declares that gratitude is the second most common positive emotion that individuals experience. Likewise, in a study conducted by Sommers and Kosmitzki (1988), 10% - 30% of the participants indicated that they experience gratitude “regularly and often,” and participants also indicated that gratitude is considered a useful and constructive emotion.

More specific to the definition of gratitude, previous research indicates that as an emotion, gratitude has been defined in numerous ways (See Appendix B). However, after comparing across the various definitions, key components to the definition of gratitude can be recognized. As noted in the Appendix B, a definition of gratitude often includes the components

of emotion, benefactor or another source responsible, beneficiary, and recognition or perception. Fredrickson's (2004, p. 150) definition of gratitude is reflective of these components, such that she defines gratitude as "the emotion that arises when an individual (beneficiary) perceives that another person (benefactor) or source (e.g. God, luck, fate) has intentionally acted to improve the beneficiary's well-being."

Additionally, research has indicated three functions of gratitude (McCullough et al. 2001). First, gratitude acts as a moral barometer by indicating a change from a previous emotional state. This implies that gratitude is an "affective readout" that someone has done something for the receiver's benefit (McCullough et al. 2001 p. 252). Second, gratitude acts as a moral motivator by prompting grateful individuals to behave prosocially themselves. This suggests that the beneficiary who feels grateful will be motivated to act prosocially to their benefactor and to other outside parties. Third, gratitude can function as a moral reinforcer, such that when a beneficiary expresses gratitude towards his or her benefactor, the benefactor is encouraged to act prosocially in the future.

Indebtedness

Individuals do not always react positively to receiving a benefit from other. Instead, individuals often experience the feeling of indebtedness. Indebtedness was originally defined by Greenberg (1980, p. 4), "as the state of obligation to repay another," and has been termed the "emotional state of arousal and discomfort." The feeling of indebtedness is claimed to arise from the norm of reciprocity-that individuals should help those who have helped them, and not harm those who have helped them (Gouldner 1960). It is argued that indebtedness has motivational properties, such that when one feels indebted, one wishes to reduce indebtedness by either reciprocating or cognitively restructuring the situation (Greenberg 1980). Ultimately, the higher the indebtedness and arousal, the more motivation one has to reduce this feeling through cognitive restructuring or reciprocity.

Gratitude Versus Indebtedness

Simply by looking at the conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness, a few commonalities and differences can be noticed. First, both emotions result from receiving aid from another. Secondly, both emotions tend to motivate reciprocity or affect future behavior. Nonetheless, the valences of the emotions differ. Gratitude is considered a positive emotion, whereas indebtedness is conceptualized as being a mixed or negative emotion (Note: other differences will be described in the subsequent issues). Thus, equating these two emotions is highly problematic for marketing research. Yet, marketing scholars problematically equate gratitude to indebtedness (Palmatier et al. 2009), and use these emotions interchangeably. Since marketing researchers have only just begun to understand the importance of gratitude, or perhaps indebtedness in customer relationships (Morales 2005; Palmatier et al. 2009; Raggio and Folse 2009), it becomes of extreme importance to accurately conceptualized these two emotions so that future research does not become inundated with another fragmented construct. In summary, a comprehensive examination of consumer feelings of gratitude and indebtedness remains to be recognized in marketing research.

Issue Two: Problematic Measures

As a result of these emotions being poorly defined and used interchangeably, previous marketing research has produced problematic measures of gratitude and indebtedness. Appendix C and Appendix D present illustrative measures of these concepts in both psychology and marketing research. By examining these measures, several problems can be noted. First, there lacks a comprehensive scale for both gratitude and indebtedness and previous measures are often highly redundant. For example, measures of gratitude typically include thankful, appreciative, and grateful. Similarly, in measuring indebtedness, Dorsch and Kelley (1994) used the word “repay” in all five items, and their last two items appear highly redundant. Altogether, this gives rise to questioning whether marketing research is accurately measuring and fully capturing the emotion of indebtedness.

Second, components of gratitude and indebtedness are often being measured simultaneously and summed into measuring the same construct. As shown in Appendix D, Palmatier’s (2009) measures of “Customers’ Gratitude-Based Reciprocal Behaviors” measure both gratitude and indebtedness; such that item one reflects gratitude, while items two and three reflect indebtedness by the terms “owed” and “payback.”

Third, as noticed by looking at Johnson and Sohi’s (2001) and Dawson’s (1988) measures, the norm of reciprocity is often equated to indebtedness. The norm of reciprocity is considered to possess cognitive elements, whereas indebtedness is considered an emotion. Thus, equating indebtedness and the norm of reciprocity is also problematic.

Unfortunately, these measurement issues are a major limitation of the marketing literature; and equating gratitude and indebtedness is highly problematic considering that psychology research is beginning to show differences between these two emotions (Tsang 2006b; Watkins et al. 2006).

Issue Three: Unresolved Antecedents and Consequences

The third fundamental deficiency is that research lacks an understanding of the antecedents and consequences of gratitude and indebtedness. Previous research yields conflicting findings, examines limited constructs as potential antecedents and consequences, empirical validation of proposed antecedents and consequences is needed, and validity concerns emerge after considering the conceptual and measurement issues surrounding these two emotions. The first half of this section will describe the issues associated with the antecedents, while the second half will describe issues associated with the consequences. Please note that the following summarizes findings from specific studies on gratitude and/or indebtedness. Only two articles have examined gratitude and indebtedness in the same study (Tsang 2006b; Watkins et al. 2006).

Antecedents

Previous research reveals several conflicting findings regarding the antecedents of gratitude and indebtedness (See Table 3). For instance, Greenberg (1980) and McCullough et al. (2008) argue that both gratitude and indebtedness increase when the benefactor has benevolent

intentions. However, the findings presented in Tsang (2006b) reveal that gratitude increases when the benefactor has benevolent intentions, but that indebtedness is unaffected by the intentions of the benefactor.

Watkins et al. (2006) also attempted to differentiate between gratitude and indebtedness. In a hypothetical scenario, the findings revealed that beneficiary felt gratitude decreases, whereas indebtedness increases, as expectations of return (i.e. reciprocity) are communicated by the benefactor (Watkins et al. 2006). This finding contradicts Greenberg's (1980) argument that indebtedness increases when the benefactor has altruistic intentions; thus, there is little consensus regarding how a benefactor's intentions actually affect gratitude and indebtedness.

Table 3: Antecedents to Gratitude and Indebtedness

Shared Antecedents between Gratitude and Indebtedness	Antecedents Distinct to Gratitude	Antecedents Distinct to Indebtedness
<p>Benevolent intentions (questionable) (Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2008; Tsang 2006)</p> <p>Need for the benefit (Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2008)</p> <p>Costly to the benefactor (Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2008)</p> <p>Not role-based /seller's free will (questionable) (Greenberg; McCullough et al. 2008; Palmatier et al. 2009)</p>	<p>Decreases as expectations of return are communicated by the benefactor (Watkins et al. 2006)</p>	<p>Increases as expectations of return are communicated by the benefactor (Watkins et al. 2006)</p> <p>Who is responsible for initiating the gift (Greenberg 1980)</p> <p>Verbal and non-verbal cues emitted by others (Greenberg 1980)</p>

As detailed in Table 3, there are a limited number of constructs examined as potential antecedents of gratitude and indebtedness. For instance, the literature has not examined how service provider behavior, quality of service, exceeding or failing to meet established norms impact customer felt gratitude or indebtedness. Likewise, several proposed antecedents to these emotions have not been empirically validated. For example, Greenberg (1980) is the sole author that argues that indebtedness is affected by who is responsible for initiating the help. He claims that indebtedness is the highest when the beneficiary requests help from the benefactor. Greenberg (1980) also argues that indebtedness is affected by verbal and non-verbal cues emitted by others who witnessed the benefactor helping the beneficiary. However, little research has examined both of these claims.

Previous research has also indicated that gratitude and indebtedness share antecedents. A beneficiary's need for the benefit, the cost to the benefactor (Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2008), the beneficiary's liking of the benefactor (Watkins et al. 2006), and if the benefactor's action was performed out of free will (i.e. not role-based behavior) (Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2008; Palmatier et al. 2009), are all positioned to increase a beneficiary's felt gratitude and indebtedness. Similarly, antecedents distinct to each emotion can also be

interpreted from the above table. However, the validity of these findings becomes questionable considering that only two articles have examined gratitude and indebtedness in the same study, and that measures of gratitude have included both gratitude and indebtedness components.

By examining previous research in marketing and psychology, it becomes apparent that both disciplines lack an understanding of the antecedents of gratitude and indebtedness. Limited research clearly defines, measures or empirically examines the role of both gratitude and indebtedness and their antecedents.

Consequences

Little clarity also exists in understanding the consequences of gratitude and indebtedness. First of all, there exists the conflicting finding concerning reciprocation. Previous research suggests that gratitude and indebtedness lead to reciprocation (Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2001). Greenberg (1980) describes that indebtedness has motivational properties, that when felt, individuals will attempt to reduce indebtedness through reciprocating the favor or by cognitive restructuring (Note: Cognitive restructuring will be described later). Likewise, McCullough et al. (2001) argue that gratitude motivates an individual to reciprocate the favor or engage in pro-social behavior; and this latter argument has been empirically examined (Raggio and Folse 2009; Watkins et al. 2006). However, recent research in psychology gives rise to questioning whether both gratitude and indebtedness do in fact inspire reciprocity. Recently, a study demonstrated that when experiencing indebtedness, participants reported that they would be less likely to help the benefactor in the future, whereas when experiencing gratitude, participants reported that they would be more likely to help the benefactor in the future (Watkins et al. 2006). Watkins et al. (2006) also found gratitude to be correlated with approach behaviors, while indebtedness was correlated with avoidance behaviors. Thus, there is little consensus regarding whether indebtedness and gratitude both lead to reciprocation.

Table 4: Consequences to Gratitude and Indebtedness

Shared Consequences Between Gratitude and Indebtedness	Consequences Distinct to Gratitude	Consequences Distinct to Indebtedness
Reciprocation (questionable) (Dorsch and Kelley 1994; Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2001; Watkins et al. 2006)	Purchase intentions (Palmatier et al. 2009) Prosocial behavior (McCullough et al. 2008) Affective commitment (Raggio and Folse 2009) Trust (Palmatier et al. 2009) Positive Word-of-Mouth (Soscia 2007)	Avoidance (Watkins et al. 2006) Cognitive Restructuring (Greenberg 1980)

Additionally, only a limited number of consequences of gratitude and indebtedness have been studied. Therefore, several questions remain as to how gratitude or indebtedness affect

variables of interest to both researchers and practitioners (e.g. willingness-to-pay, future behavior; loyalty). Furthermore, several of the consequences listed above lack empirical validation. As mentioned previously, Greenberg (1980) also argued that individuals may cope with indebtedness through cognitive restructuring or reciprocation. Cognitive restructuring implies that individuals will reexamine and then restructure the cognitions that lead one to feel indebted. Restructured cognitions may lead individuals to conclude that: 1) the degree of benefits received was not as large as initially perceived, 2) the donor's costs were less than they were initially believed, 3) the locus of causality of the donor's actions was more external than they initially thought (i.e. the individual did not ask for the help or benefit), 4) the donor's motives were not as altruistic as they originally believed, or 5) they wrongly perceived the opinions of relevant others about the degree to which they are obligated to repay the donor (Greenberg 1980). Currently, limited research empirically examines cognitive restructuring; likewise, no marketing research relates this process to indebtedness. Therefore, future research is needed to address this issue.

Given that only two articles measured both gratitude and indebtedness throughout the same study, and given the previously mentioned conceptual and measurement issues associated with these two emotions, validity concerns are likely raised. By examining the above findings, it becomes evident that there is little consensus regarding the consequences of gratitude and indebtedness.

Issue Four: Relationship Marketing and Emotions

Lastly, the final deficiency relates specifically to relationship marketing research. Both conceptual and empirical articles use reciprocity as the theoretical foundation for relationship marketing without examining the psychological mechanisms (i.e. emotions) that may motivate reciprocity-based behaviors (Palmatier et al. 2009). Not a single article defines, measures, or empirically examines the relationship between gratitude and indebtedness and reciprocal behavior. Likewise, no research incorporates these two emotions into a nomological model of relationship marketing. Thus, incorporating gratitude and indebtedness into nomological model of relationship marketing to understand antecedents and consequences of these emotions is warranted.

METHODOLOGY

Given that the aim of the research was to further our understanding of consumers' lived experiences of emotions in exchanges and how these experiences are interpreted in consumers' stories, a qualitative method was used. Ten phenomenological interviews, also known as in-depth interviews were conducted. This form of interviewing has been recognized as a valuable method for reaching an in-depth and thick description of human life from a first person perspective (McCracken 1988; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989; Velliquette 2000). Phenomenological interviews are an intensive method that strive not to generalize or discover, but rather to acquire an understanding of the character, organization, and logic of culture (McCracken 1988; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989; Velliquette 2000). In summary, phenomenological interviews were selected due to the advantages of this methodology and its consistency with the goal of the current research.

An existential-phenomenological view accentuates that stories (i.e. often termed narratives) are associated with a specific context and reveal an individual's lived experience (Cherrier and Murray 2007). This perspective entails three primary concepts: intentionality, emergent dialogue and hermeneutic endeavor (Cherrier and Murray 2007; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). Intentionality implies that participants selected to partake in the research have experience related to the topic of study. Dialogue implies that the interview with the participant is conversational and that the participant's story allows the conversation to transpire. Lastly, hermeneutic endeavor refers to the analysis of the interviews or textual data. Scholars acknowledge that phenomenological interviews fit well with hermeneutical analysis (Thompson 1997), which refers to analyzing the texts of consumer stories. Hermeneutical analysis is an iterative approach to analyzing textual data. Particularly, this analysis involves extensive comparisons of the text, comparisons within and across interviews, and comparisons between the text and literature to construct conceptual coherence (Adkins and Corus 2009; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Thompson 1997). More explanation of this iterative process will be provided in the analysis below. Following this methodology, the procedures advocated by Thompson (1997) were adhered to. These procedures are commonly followed in marketing research (Adkins and Corus 2009; Adkins and Ozanne 2005; Haley and Grant 2011) and been used to explore a variety of topics, such as symbolic consumption (Velliquette 2000), relationship marketing (Foster 2009) and negative self-conscious emotions (Pounders 2010).

Sample

Participants were selected by judgment or purposive sampling—a procedure in which the researcher uses subjective judgment to choose a sample reasoned to be suitable for the study (Adkins and Ozanne 2005; Haley and Grant 2011). When practicing this method, researchers set precise criteria in accordance with the research topic, which is used to select research participants (McCracken 1988). Specifically, sampling was designed in adherence to the sampling procedures advocated in the literature: a small number of participants were selected, the selected participants did not possess expertise or ignorance of consumer emotions, and participants differed in terms of gender, age, education, residency and occupation (Foster 2009; Pounders 2010; Thompson and Haytko 1997; Velliquette 2000).

Consistent with the procedures of other marketing research (Adkins and Corus 2009; Pounders 2010), an initial group of prospective participants was established through personal contacts of the researchers. Of the thirty-two prospective participants, ten were elected to partake in the research. A sample of ten has been reasoned suitable for phenomenological research and analysis (Adkins and Corus 2009; Creswell 1998; Foster 2009; Pounders 2010). This procedure led to selecting each a male and female for all age groups (Pounders 2010). All ten participants were citizens of the United States and lived in Texas, Louisiana, Illinois, Oklahoma, Florida, Wisconsin, or Tennessee. The participants also held various socio-economic statuses; particularly differing in terms of occupation, education and income (see Table 5).

Literature Review

An extensive literature review is a key component to both phenomenological interviews and hermeneutical analysis. Particularly, a review of the relevant literature assists the researcher

in identifying the research questions, determining the interview domain, and developing expectations (McCracken 1988; Velliquette 2000). An extensive literature review also assists the researcher in developing a priori themes. A priori themes are concepts that have been observed in the existing literature, which are also anticipated to be evident in the interviews or textual data. Blumer (1969, p. 147-148) terms a priori themes as “sensitizing instruments,” such that a priori themes offer a “general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances.” Ultimately, through grasping a priori themes before conducting interviews, the researcher is assisted in discerning expected versus emergent themes in the data (Velliquette 2000).

Table 5: Participant Information

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Home State	Gratitude Example	Stage ¹	Indebtedness Example	Stage
Leslie	F	29	Policy Analyst	LA	Home Repair Service	Expl	Furniture Store	Expl
Matt	M	29	Instructor	FL	Hotel	Expl	Apartment Complex	Expa
Brooke	F	31	K-12 Teacher	TN	Electronics Retailer	Expa	Bank	Dis
Andrew	M	34	Bank Representative/ VP of Marketing	OK	Cable and Internet Service	Expl	Teacher /Mentor	Expl Expa
Dave	M	40	Executive Officer	TX	Painting Company	Expa	N/A	
Sally	F	47	Stay at Home Mom	TX	Electronics Retailer	Com	Jeweler	Expl
Tom	M	50	Health Care Owner	LA	Builder	Com	Kitchen Supply Retailer	Expl
Kay	F	58	Retired	WI	Automotive Repair	Com	Cosmetics Retailer	Expl
John	M	69	Wine Salesman	WI	Mechanic	Com	N/A	
Linda	F	65	Realtor	IL	Library	Expl	Clothing Retailer	Dis
					Midwest Express	Com		

In the current research, a priori themes were identified through completing a comprehensive literature review of gratitude and indebtedness in psychology and marketing (i.e. the majority of themes were drawn from Emmons and McCullough 2004; Greenberg 1980; McCullough et al. 2008; Palmatier et al. 2009). These themes were classified into one of three categories: conceptualization, antecedents, and consequences (Pounders 2010; Velliquette 2000), which is consistent with the research questions (See Table 6). Moreover, these a priori themes also helped shape the interview guide. A priori themes were previously mentioned in the motivation section and will be further described when describing the research results.

¹ Stage refers to the relationship stage between the informant and the other party (i.e. service provider) mentioned in the interview. Stages are consistent with Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987). Expl = Exploration; Expa = Expansion; Com = Commitment

Table 6: A Priori Themes

Conceptualization Themes		Antecedent Themes		Consequence Themes	
Gratitude	Indebtedness	Gratitude	Indebtedness	Gratitude	Indebtedness
Intent to Reciprocate	Intent to Reciprocate	Benevolent Intentions	Increasing expectations of return	Trust	Avoidance Motivations
Positive	Mixed/Negative	Effort		Affective Commitment	(Lack of pro-social behavior/less likely to help the benefactor)
	Un-enduring	Non-Role Based	Benevolent Intentions	Purchase Intent (pro-social / helping behavior)	
		Need for Benefit	Locus of Causality	Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	Cognitive Restructuring
		Costly to the Other Party	Social Presence		
			Costly to the Other Party		
			Ethics in B2B gift-giving		

Interview Preparation

After reviewing the relevant literature, a semi-structured interview guide was developed. Interview guides have been suggested to facilitate systematic data collection and analyses (Patton 1987). The interview guide drew from prior interview guides used in marketing research (Foster 2009; Pounders 2010; Walz 2009). The interview guide was based on the a priori themes and was constructed of several open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are deemed advantageous in exploratory research where informant responses are unpredictable (Palys 2003). Moreover, questions phrased in a general and non-directive manner were preferred to prevent leading informants to specific answers (Haley and Grant 2011; McCracken 1988; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). The interview guide was structured to first build rapport with the informant, next gather biographical data, and then discuss questions pertinent to the research objectives.

To assist in data collection and interview implementation, the researcher familiarized participants with parts of the research process before conducting the interviews. Due to the potential complications of remembering an experience on the spot, informants were provided an explanation of the purpose of the study, the grand-tour question (described in the next section), and an explanation of all relevant contexts (e.g. shopping experience, service provider, retailer, etc.) two days before the interview (Pounders 2010). The explanation did not include the words gratitude or indebtedness, nor did it include definitions of gratitude and indebtedness because the objective of the interview was to more fully understand these emotions from an individual's perspective. Furthermore, it was believed that stating these words may contaminate the data collection. Lastly, conversing with informants at this time allowed the researcher to determine a setting that would be relaxing to informants thereby enabling them to express their experiences.

Interviews were then conducted and were conversational in nature. Three interviews took place at the informant's place of work, four interviews took place at the informant's home, and three interviews took place at a local coffee shop. In adhering to the procedures of Pounders (2010), after meeting the informant at the particular location, the researcher first gathered consent from the informant. The participant was then informed that they would remain anonymous, and none of their comments would be associated with their name. Next, the researcher described the format of the interview and requested authorization to record the interview.

Interview Execution

The interview was structured in two parts corresponding to each emotion: gratitude and indebtedness. The interview began by the researcher first describing that emotions, in general, are commonly experienced in exchange situations. This explanation was followed by a grand-tour question asking informants to think of a time "where you felt like you needed to or you wanted to repay because of something that happened in a shopping experience or because of something that happened in an interaction with a service provider."² As a result of previous research demonstrating that both gratitude and indebtedness may be linked to reciprocity, it was believed that the grand-tour question would yield a response in which the informant felt either gratitude or indebtedness. Thus, through probing, the researcher attempted to identify which emotion was elicited in the informant's experience. After all probing questions were asked, the researcher then asked if the informant could think of a time where they felt the differing emotion (gratitude or indebtedness). For example, if the informant first described and discussed in detail a situation which elicited gratitude, the researcher would ask the informant if they could think of a shopping or service experience in which they felt indebted. Therefore, the interview began very broadly by asking informants to reflect upon their experience, but transitioned into asking detailed questions about their experience. Probing questions were based on a priori themes found in the marketing and psychology literature and were used to further expand our knowledge of each emotion as it related to the research questions in this essay. Probing was also used to determine the relationship stage between the informant and the service provider (i.e. employee, firm). The researcher sought variety in informant-service provider relationship stage to enhance generalizability and to further understand the themes across stages.

Each interview took 45-60 to complete and all interviews occurred between February and March 2011. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim, yielding 120 pages of single-spaced text.

Textual Analysis

An iterative hermeneutical approach was used to interpret the data. Similar to other marketing research (Adkins and Corus 2009; Adkins and Ozanne 2005; Haley and Grant 2011), the procedures recommended by Thompson (1997) were followed. A hermeneutic approach maintains that every interpretation is essentially based on a preceding interpretation. This idea is

² It is an underlying assumption of the research that in inequitable situations in which consumers attribute the inequity to the other party, consumers intending to reciprocate experience gratitude or indebtedness. Therefore, the current research does not address inequitable situations in which the consumer attributes the inequity to the self.

fundamental to what is known as the hermeneutic circle, that an understanding of the entire text results from reference to each interview, and that each interview is understood as a result of the entire text. Moreover, the researcher's background knowledge of the phenomena is critical to the analysis. Particularly, a researcher's background knowledge provides an initial frame of reference, and the researcher pulls from his or her background knowledge and personal experience to understand the textual data (Thompson 1997). Therefore a comprehensive literature review plays a key role in the analysis. This can be noted in Thompson (1997, p. 452) which states that researchers need to maintain expertise in the literature to acknowledge the relationships among the data, and "to bring these consumption stories to life." Thus, as previously mentioned, an extensive literature review on gratitude and indebtedness in both marketing and psychology was conducted.

Interpretation of the data occurred through intra and inter-textual analysis described and advocated by Thompson (1997). First, the researchers shifted back-and-forth within each interview (passages to the entire text), and then shifted back-and-forth between each interview and the entire set of interviews (Spiggle 1994). Intra-textual analysis refers to the former, in which the researchers assessed each interview in isolation and sought to identify patterns of key concepts within each interview. At this stage, initial coding was performed. Inter-textual analysis refers to the latter, in which the researchers read across interviews in search of similarities and patterns among the interview text. In addition, inter-textual analysis was performed to identify emergent themes and a framework that accounted for similarities and differences in informant responses. The intra and inter-textual analyses were not independent, such that as new insights were gained in subsequent text, the researchers would go back and reconsider previously interpreted texts (Thompson 1997). Throughout the analysis, the researchers performed member checks to maintain interpretation accuracy. Ultimately, this iterative process permitted a more unified interpretation of the data through refining concepts and illustrating their theoretical implications (Spiggle 1994).

Finally, to build conceptual linkages among the three categories of themes (i.e. conceptualizations, antecedents and consequences) and to derive meaningful insight to marketers, dialectical tacking was performed. This process included comparing the interpretations and themes to the existing literature on gratitude and indebtedness. Following this approach, a conceptual framework offering marketing implications emerged from the data.

Summary

In closing, a qualitative method of inquiry was used to examine the research questions. Ten phenomenological interviews were conducted to understand consumers' experiences of gratitude and indebtedness in marketing exchanges. The textual data was analyzed using an iterative hermeneutical approach that permitted the development of a conceptual framework of these emotions. This framework as well as the implications for marketing researchers and practitioners will be offered throughout the remainder of this essay.

RESULTS

This section is organized into four segments. The first three segments will discuss themes that correspond to the conceptualizations, antecedents, and consequences of the emotions gratitude and indebtedness, respectively. Each of these three segments will include a discussion of the a priori themes, emergent themes, and if applicable, detail any inconsistencies between the a priori and emergent themes. The first segment will address the first overarching deficiency, ill-defined conceptualizations, by offering detailed insight of the conceptualizations of each emotion. Additionally, the conceptualization segment will provide information that assists in developing comprehensive measures of each emotion; thereby addressing the second deficiency, problematic measures. The second and third segments focus on the third and fourth deficiencies by examining the antecedents and consequences of each emotion and by providing insight to the role of gratitude and indebtedness in relationship marketing. This section will conclude with a final segment that presents a conceptual model for the study of these emotions in marketing.

Conceptualization Themes

Table 7: Conceptualizations of Gratitude and Indebtedness

	Theme	Existing Conceptualization	F/P/N³	Extended / New Theme	New Conceptualization
Gratitude	Positive	It is pleasant (Fredrickson 2009; Watkins et al. 2006).	F		
	Intent to Reciprocate	The emotion motivates reciprocation (McCullough et al. 2001).	F	Intent to Reciprocate ➤ Other-Focus	There is an intent to reciprocate to benefit the other party's welfare.
				Other-Focused Cognitions	The individual makes positive attributions of the other party.
				Enduring	The emotion is long-lived.
Indebtedness	Mixed / Negative	It is uncomfortable and aversive to experience (Greenberg 1980; Watkins et al. 2006).	F		
	Intent to Reciprocate	The emotion motivates reciprocation (Greenberg 1980).	F	Intent to Reciprocate ➤ Self-Focus	There is an intent to reciprocate to benefit one's own welfare.
				Self-Focused Cognitions	The individual thinks about him/herself and the inequity between themselves and the other party.
	Un-enduring	The emotion is short-lived (Greenberg 1980).	F		

The literature indicated five a priori themes in regards to the conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness (See Table 7). These themes were confirmed by the data. In addition, two new themes emerged from the data regarding the conceptualization of gratitude, while one

³ F represents that the a priori theme was fully supported in the interviews. P represents that the a priori theme was partially supported in the interviews. N represents that the a priori theme was not supported in the interviews.

additional theme emerged regarding the conceptualization of indebtedness. These themes address the first deficiency, ill-defined gratitude and indebtedness concepts. The subsequent discussion will first describe the a priori and emergent conceptualization themes for gratitude and then detail the a priori and emergent conceptualization themes for indebtedness (See Table 8 for examples of each theme).

A Priori Themes – Gratitude Conceptualization

First of all, research has conceptualized gratitude as being a positive emotion (Fredrickson 2009). The data highly supported this conceptualization, which can be illustrated through several statements provided by informants. For instance, Leslie claimed, “Grateful, it’s just, you feel happy about it.” After describing a recent experience with the Apple store, Sally mentioned, “I feel really good talking about it again.” Throughout describing grateful experiences, informants also mentioned other positive feelings, such as feeling valued, important, cared for, or even special. For example, when shopping for appliances at Best Buy, Brooke stated, “I felt kind of a little bit special, because they started bringing stuff to me. Like I didn’t have to walk around the store so much. They just started bringing it over, and saying is this what you want? You know what I mean? So they were very, I felt kind of important. And that made me feel good. In describing the automotive business, Kay mentioned that, “I feel like I’m extremely valued every time I leave there with my car fixed.” Leslie also described how she felt cared for by a painter, “I know he cares about doing a really good job, but based on everything he did, I felt cared for too.”

Second, prior research has suggested that gratitude motivates reciprocation (McCullough et al. 2001). Gratitude has been considered a moral motivator, such that an individual experiencing gratitude is motivated to act pro-socially towards his/her benefactor (i.e. other party) or to another individual. This theme was largely supported by the data since informants often described their desire to reciprocate; however, the data revealed that the primary purpose of reciprocal intent was to benefit the other party. Therefore, this new understanding extends the a priori theme by detailing the basis of the reciprocal behavior. Thus, to include this pertinent, novel information, this theme is now conceptualized as: there is an intent to reciprocate to benefit the other party’s welfare. Several of the comments highlight this theme. For example, Leslie contracted with a company to paint and renovate an older home that she recently purchased. After completing their work, Leslie described her intent to reciprocate through the statement, “I was just appreciative of what you’ve done, so I want to do something in return for you.” Dave indicated his intent to reciprocate to a recent vendor through his comment, “I wanted to give back to him because I wanted to reciprocate.” Lastly, in describing how she felt after a mechanic fixed her son’s car, Kay also expressed her intent to benefit the other party, “I just want to get Chris more business.”

Emergent Themes – Gratitude Conceptualization

Two new themes regarding the conceptualization of gratitude also emerged from the data. The first emergent theme was other-focused cognitions. This theme implies that when an individual experiences gratitude, he/she makes positive attributions about the other party that provided the benefit. Since gratitude arises from interpreting the outcome to be due to another

(i.e. other- agency cognitive appraisal), it is interesting that the other party became the focus of informants' cognitions. This emergent theme seems similar to the Threat to Self-Esteem theory, which states that when help is perceived as being supportive, the individual will have positive evaluations of the donor and experience positive affect (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983). Leslie made positive attributions of the painter, "He didn't have, and I am not trying to be mean, but he didn't have people working for him that didn't really care. He is just so genuine." Dave positively described his painter through the statement, "I think it's the way he is. He's just very friendly." Matt also described the bartender as genuine, he mentioned, "I think she genuinely liked customers to treat her respectfully. I think she genuinely wanted us to have a good time." Sally described her positive cognitions about the Apple associate; she stated "I think she really wanted to help. I think she is a good employee." Lastly, Kay also mentioned her positive attributions about the automotive business, "They want to be known as fair, and honest, and looking out for your best interest. And I think that they are very honest with everybody."

The second emergent theme was enduring. This implies that gratitude can be considered an enduring emotion, such that an individual can experience gratitude for a long period of time. Notably, all ten informants indicated that they still feel grateful to their benefactor. For example, Matt mentioned, "Gratitude is just ongoing." In describing a recent experience with a cable and internet service provider, Andrew claimed, "I still feel grateful that he was willing to do that." John stated, "I still remember what he did, so I just feel really thankful." Likewise, Tom indicated that he felt grateful to his home builder every day.

A Priori Themes – Indebtedness Conceptualization

Previous research conceptualizes indebtedness as a mixed or negative emotion, such that it is an uncomfortable and aversive emotion to experience (Greenberg 1980; Watkins et al. 2006). This also was largely supported through the data. The negative aspect to indebtedness can be viewed in the following examples. Sally mentioned that, "It's a yucky feeling and uncomfortable. And you know, even at my age, I will feel a little bad." Likewise, Andrew stated, "I don't like being in a position where I feel like I owe something." Leslie stated that, "Indebted has a negative connotation to it." Several comments also demonstrate that indebtedness can be a mixed emotion, such that it includes positive and negative elements. It is important to note that indebtedness was never described as strictly a positive emotion. For instance, Kay described indebtedness as, "Indebtedness means, well I guess it is more negative than it is positive." Similarly, Brooke mentioned how indebtedness is a mixed emotion in her experience with a bank, "What they did was pretty incredible. So I felt obligated, and I mean, I even felt a little guilty."

Prior research also indicates that indebtedness also motivates reciprocation (Greenberg 1980; Greenberg 1983). Specifically, when an individual experiences indebtedness, he/she attempts to reduce this feeling through reciprocation or cognitive restructuring—reinterpreting previous cognitions of the helping situation. This theme was heavily supported; however the data revealed that the basis of the reciprocal behavior was to benefit their own welfare. In other words, informants mentioned that their intentions to reciprocate fixated on improving their own well-being and ridding the way they feel. Therefore, the prior conceptualization of this theme was revised to reflect this information and reads as: there is an intent to reciprocate to benefit

Table 8: Examples of Confirmed or Emergent Themes Reflecting Conceptualizations of Gratitude and Indebtedness

	Theme	Conceptualization	Examples
Gratitude	Positive	The emotion is pleasant (Watkins et al. 2006).	Grateful, it's just you feel happy about it. (F29) I really feel good talking about it again. (F47)
	Intent to Reciprocate ➤ Other-Focus	There is an intent to reciprocate to benefit the other party's welfare.	I was just appreciative of what you've done so I want to do something in return for you. (F29) I wanted to give back to him because I wanted to reciprocate. (M40)
	Other-Focused Cognitions	The individual makes positive attributions of the other party.	I think that they are very honest. (F58) I think she genuinely wanted us to have a good time. (M29)
	Enduring	The emotion is long-lived.	But I still remember what he did, so I just feel really thankful. (M69) I still feel grateful that he was willing to do that. (M34)
Indebtedness	Mixed / Negative	The emotion is uncomfortable and aversive to experience (Greenberg 1980; Watkins et al. 2006).	It's a yucky feeling and uncomfortable. And you know, even at my age, I will feel a little bad. (F47) And I don't like being in a position where I feel like I owe something. (M34)
	Intent to Reciprocate ➤ Self-Focus	There is an intent to reciprocate to benefit one's own welfare.	It's like maybe they did something or invested something into the relationship, so they are like here (using his hands to point to a higher level) and they have to fulfill this much of the relationship, and you are here so you try to build, or I guess the word might be, you use sort of an emotional piggybank, to make it back up to here. So you can say okay, I feel like I paid my debt to you. (M40) I feel like with indebtedness, to me, you try to resolve that. If it took me a week to do it, I probably feel worse, than if I did it the next day. (M29)
	Self-Focused Cognitions	The individual thinks about him/herself and the inequity between themselves and the other party.	Indebtedness is when you receive something but you think you need to compensate. (M34) I think, I owe you. (M29)
	Un-enduring	The emotion is short-lived (Greenberg 1980).	My personal motivation to get myself out of indebtedness is what terminates that emotion sooner. (M34) Well, after I purchased something from them, I didn't feel indebted anymore. (F65)

one's own welfare. For instance, Matt mentioned, "I feel like with indebtedness, to me, you try to resolve that. If it took me a week to do it, I probably feel worse, than if I did it the next day." Andrew also described, "I am more motivated to get myself out of

indebtedness because when you feel like you are in debt. Or at least when I am in debt, I feel like I owe something.” Interestingly, several informants described reciprocal intent of equal value to the original benefit, which is consistent with Fredrickson’s (2004) discussion on tit-for-tat reciprocity. For instance, Dave mentioned, “It’s like maybe they did something or invested something into the relationship, so they are like here (using his hands to point to a higher level) and they have fulfilled this much of the relationship, and you are here so you try to build, or I guess the word might be, you use sort of an emotional piggybank, to make it back up to here. So you can say, okay, I feel like I paid my debt to you.” Kay stated, “It’s just like she did me a favor, so now I am going to do her a favor.” Lastly, Matt described indebtedness as, “Quid quo pro. This for that.”

As a result of reducing indebtedness through reciprocating or cognitive restructuring, indebtedness is conceptualized as an un-enduring emotion. This was supported, such that informants often described the emotion as being short-lived. For example, Andrew stated, “My personal motivation to get myself out of indebtedness is what terminates that emotion sooner.” Likewise, in describing her experience with a department store, Linda mentioned, “Well, after I purchased something from them, I didn’t feel indebted anymore.”

Emergent Theme – Indebtedness Conceptualization

An additional theme regarding the conceptualization of indebtedness, self-focused cognitions, also emerged from the data. Self-focused cognitions imply that when an individual experiences indebtedness, one fixates on the self and thinks about the inequity between themselves and the other party. Moreover, individuals have negative thoughts about their current standing and consider their standing as imbalanced; as a result, individuals actively focus on attaining balance. This seems similar to Greenberg (1980), which mentions that when experiencing indebtedness, opportunities to re-establish equity become salient. In addition, this emergent theme appears relevant to the Threat to Self-Esteem theory which states that when help is perceived as threatening to one’s self-esteem, the individual will experience negative affect. For example, Andrew claimed, “Indebtedness is when you receive something but you think you need to compensate. And I don’t like being in that position.” Similarly, Matt mentioned, “I think I owe. I think everybody has this perception of relative inputs to outputs, and when one experiences indebtedness, they assess these inputs and outputs.”

In addition, following cognitive appraisal theory, it can be implied that when experiencing indebtedness, individuals focus on the self and often have negative cognitions about the self. Informants commented on experiencing negative self-agency (i.e. self-conscious) emotions, which according to cognitive appraisal theory, result from interpreting the outcome as self-caused. For instance, Brooke described how she felt guilty after considering her experience with a bank, “I even felt a little guilty.” Sally described how she felt bad about herself for not purchasing, “I felt really bad.” Leslie also described how she felt by not purchasing something from the furniture store, “I felt really bad.” Since negative self-agency emotions occur when one disapproves of his/her blameworthy actions (Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988), these examples illustrate how individuals fixate on themselves and how they are feeling.

Summary

In summary, the previous section outlined the conceptualization themes that were present in the interviews. These themes illustrate that the conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness include four different dimensions: affect, behavior, cognition and duration. The affect dimension implies that gratitude is a positive emotion, while indebtedness is a mixed or negative emotion; the behavior dimension implies that grateful individuals act to benefit the other party, while indebted individuals act to benefit themselves; the cognitive dimension implies that grateful individuals make positive attributions of the other party, while indebted individuals think about themselves and the inequity within the situation; lastly, the duration dimension implies that gratitude is an enduring emotion, while indebtedness is an un-enduring emotion. In conclusion, these themes address the first two fundamental deficiencies by offering comprehensive conceptualizations of each emotion and by suggesting dimensions to be measured when studying these emotions.

Antecedent Themes

This section addresses the third and fourth deficiencies in the literature by providing insight to the antecedents of gratitude and indebtedness and by offering an understanding of the role of these emotions in relationship marketing. Table 9 indicates that most of the a priori antecedent themes for gratitude were supported; however, the data failed to support several a priori antecedent themes for indebtedness. In addition to finding confirmation or disconfirmation of a priori themes, sub-themes and new themes were also present in the data. The following section will first present the a priori themes and emergent themes for gratitude, then describe the a priori themes and emergent themes for indebtedness, and finally conclude with a discussion regarding the inconsistencies of a priori and emergent themes (See Table 10 for examples of each antecedent theme).

A Priori Themes – Antecedents of Gratitude

Previous research suggests that gratitude is affected by the other party's intentions (Emmons and McCullough 2004; Tsang 2006). An individual is likely to experience gratitude to the extent that he/she perceives that the other party has benevolent intentions—the other party “intended to benefit the individual for the sake of the individual” (Roberts, 2004, p. 62). In other words, the other party wants the individual to benefit for altruistic reasons. This was largely supported by the data; however several sub-themes emerged within this theme. Specifically, the theme benevolent intentions also includes protection and personalization components. Based on the data, the conceptualization of benevolent intentions is revised to include these components. Therefore, the updated conceptualization is the following: the individual⁴ perceives that the other party⁵ has good intentions by looking out for the individual's best interests (protection); rendering service specific to the individual's needs (personalization); or by wanting the individual to benefit. The fundamental conceptualization of this theme is illustrated throughout the subsequent examples. Kay stated, “I think it's a good intention. They mean well, you know,

⁴ Individual is synonymous to customer, beneficiary, or recipient of the benefit.

⁵ Other party is synonymous to the service provider, benefactor, donor, employee or firm.

Table 9: Primary Antecedents of Gratitude and Indebtedness

	Theme	Existing Conceptualization	F/P/N ⁶	Extended / New Theme	New Conceptualization
Gratitude	Benevolent Intentions	“The other party intended to benefit the individual for the sake of the individual” (Roberts, 2004, p. 62)	F	Benevolent Intentions ➤ Protection ➤ Personalization	The individual ⁷ perceives that the other party ⁸ has good intentions by looking out for the individual’s best interests; rendering service specific to the individual’s needs; or by wanting the individual to benefit.
	Effort	“Resources expended to market a product” (Morales 2005, p. 806).	F	Role Integrity ➤ Time ➤ Efficiency ➤ Flexibility ➤ Effort	The other party enacts his/her role to an outstanding degree by appropriately surpassing an individual’s expectations of the amount of time, efficiency, flexibility and effort put forth into the service process.
	Non-Role Based	“The individual perceives that the other party’s behaviors are non-contractual and within their volitional control” (Palmatier et al. 2009, p. 6).	F	Relevant Extra-Role Behavior	The individual perceives that the other party’s behaviors are non-contractual and within their volitional control, but reasonable to their duties (i.e. job description).
	Need for Benefit	“Refers to the condition in which a person requires or desires something, such that when a need exists, the pertinent item or situation entails greater value” (Palmatier et al. 2009, p. 7)	F		
	Costly to the Other Party	“The cost incurred by the other party in providing a benefit” (Tesser et al. 1968, p. 233)	N		
				Comforting	The other party makes the individual feel at ease.
Indebtedness	Expectations of return	The other party communicates that he/she expects the individual to reciprocate (Watkins et al. 2006).	F		
	Benevolent Intentions	“The extent that the other party was more concerned with the individual’s welfare than his own “(Greenberg 1980, p. 5).	P	Equivalent Intentions	The other party was equally concerned with the individual’s and his own welfare.

⁶ F represents that the a priori theme was fully supported in the interviews. P represents that the a priori was partially supported in the interviews. N represents that the a priori theme was not supported in the interviews.

⁷ Individual is synonymous to customer, beneficiary, or recipient of the benefit.

⁸ Other party is synonymous to the service provider, benefactor, donor, employee or firm.

Table 9 continued

	Locus of Causality	"The individual's perception that he/she is responsible for the other party's help attempt" (Greenberg 1980, p. 8).	N		
	Social Presence	"The verbal and nonverbal cues provided by witnesses to the receipt of the benefit, co-recipients of the benefit, or the other party" (Greenberg, 1980, p. 10).	N		
	Costly to the Other Party	"The individual perceives that the net benefits (rewards minus costs) incurred by the other party are less than his/her benefits" (Greenberg 1980, p. 6).	N		
	Ethics in B2B gift-giving	The extent to which the individual perceives the gift as being ethical (Dorsch and Kelley 1994).	N		
				Other party norm violation (exchange)	The other party exhibits excessive behaviors, including too much time or effort put forth into the service process.
				Other party norm violation (role)	The other party's actions are outside of relevant job responsibilities.
				Customer norm violation (exchange)	The individual has violated an exchange expectation by either putting forth too little effort, or by being unable to reciprocate (e.g. purchase).
				Customer norm violation (role)	The individual has failed to engage in expected behaviors.
				Customer Vulnerability	The situation or the other party makes the individual feel exposed.

they don't want more than they need to have." Kay also stated that the automotive company fired an employee for not having benevolent intentions, "I think they are very honest and they don't over charge. They just charge, as they see things because Chris actually fired a guy because he tried to say that different things were wrong with a car that weren't wrong with a car so he could run up the bill." Matt stated, "No I don't think she had any ulterior motive." Likewise, Andrew stated, "I didn't get the impression that there were any ulterior motives."

The protection component, which refers to the other party looking out for the individual's best interests, was present in several interviews. For example, Kay described how the automotive employee protected her from making an unnecessary purchase. Specifically, she described, "And, they (Automotive employee) said, 'Well, ugh, that can't be right because we just changed that last year. The tires are only a year old. They don't need to be replaced. So they went back through their records, and they found the dates

that they had done different things to the car that the Ford garage said needed to be repaired And they (Automotive Company), keep these detailed records so that they can go back and check, and you know, see if there are any warranties on the stuff that they fix. And they found one, which was \$375 savings.” Likewise, Tom also mentioned how his homebuilder also protects him from making wrongful decisions, “It’s not just him asking me if I like the way it looks, it more like he will tell me, “no you shouldn’t do it this way, and this is why.” So the answer is, he is looking out for your best interests, irrespective of you wants. Because you may want this and he knows that that would be a stupid thing to do, and he will tell you this and tell you why. John also described how his mechanic protected him by saving him money, “Instead of buying another car, I just bought a used engine with only 50,000 miles on it, and I just had him slap that in for about \$400. But to get a new engine in, that would have cost a couple thousand dollars.”

The personalization component, which refers to the other party rendering service specific to the individual’s needs, was also revealed in several of the interviews. For instance, Dave described how one of his vendors communicated with him, “It’s a combination of using a more friendly personal approach, to ask about work.” Leslie described how a painter made a bed specifically for her King Charles Spaniel, “He made Reese’s (her dog) bed too and he sold them for \$100, and he just gave me one. I was like...ah!” In describing their experiences, several informants indicated that a service provider remembered something specific about them. For instance, Matt described how a server remembered his name and his favorite beverage, “For a group of 15 of us, she remembered what beers we liked from the night before. When I ultimately left the property we were on the first name basis with the bartender.” Similarly, Linda described how a service provider also remembered her name and gave her personalized service, “When I walk in the door, they greet me by name. It’s more like an individual service. They don’t say what’s your name? Instead, they say, hi, how are you today Linda? Additionally, Brooke expressed that Best Buy personalized their service to her, “They brought everything to him and they brought everything to me. I felt kind of a little bit special, because they started bringing stuff to me. Like I didn’t have to walk around the store so much. They just started bringing it over and asking, is this what you want?”

The second a priori theme was effort, conceptualized as resources expended to market a product (Morales 2005). More specifically, Morales (2005) demonstrated that firm effort positively affects customer felt gratitude. This finding was supported through the current data; however, effort appeared to capture only one dimension of a larger theme—role integrity. Role integrity, which consists of the four following dimensions: time, efficiency, flexibility, and effort, is conceptualized as the extent to which the individual perceives that the other party enacts his/her role to an outstanding degree by appropriately surpassing an individual’s expectations of the amount of time, efficiency, flexibility or effort put forth into the service process. Therefore this new conceptualization not only captures effort, but also presents a larger picture of role integrity. In addition, the behaviors that elicited these perceptions were desired by informants and relevant informants’ current needs. This new conceptualization was evident in several interviews. For example, the fundamental conceptualization of this theme can be observed in Matt’s comment, “The bartender was great repeatedly for extended periods of time. And I mean, she was phenomenal, like above and beyond.” Similarly, an example from Leslie also depicts role integrity, “His standard is high enough.”

The time dimension of role integrity implies that the individual perceives that the other party has committed to addressing their need regardless of the amount of time needed to complete the task. An example from Sally illustrates this dimension. Specifically, when describing her experience in getting help for her dad, Sally mentioned that a retail employee performed her role outstandingly, “She (retail employee) said, hey, if you do this, call back, I will stay on the phone with him, and do whatever it takes to see when his appointments are. And she (retail employee) said, where I’m sitting in customer service, I am at Apple Store on Bluebonnet, the phone doesn’t allow me to call out. But I (retail employee) am here for another 15 minutes, so can you (Sally) call him (Sally’s dad) and tell him to call me right back? And I (retail employee) will stay on the phone with him for as long as it takes to get it figured out. And she sat on the phone with him for 30 minutes to make sure that everything was done right.” Similarly, Linda describes how the librarian spent time with her, “She must have spent 20 minutes with me.” An example from Andrew also illustrates the time dimension, “But I was just amazed by the way he stuck with it. Like the whole time. He didn’t flake out on me. And he stayed there until it worked. I was just so impressed because this guy he came over and he stayed as long as it took to get it fixed.”

The efficiency dimension of role integrity implies that the other party quickly addresses the individual’s need. A comment from Kay depicts the efficiency component to role integrity, “They get at it much faster than what I would expect.” Similarly, a comment from Leslie also illustrates efficiency, “He did an amazing job in good time.”

The flexibility dimension of role integrity refers to the service provider offering accommodations for the customer. Brooke’s comment reflects the flexibility dimension, “They extended our time frame. Like usually they have 60 days, but I think they gave us an extra month or an extra 45 days to return this stuff.” An example from Linda also depicts the flexibility dimension, “Like on Wednesday night, it’s Ladies Night, and if I don’t like what’s on the menu for that night. I’ll say, would it be okay if I had this instead? And they say, well sure. They will custom cook what you want. Sometimes they have weird stuff, and I just say, can I get a burger and a bowl of fruit, and they will.” Kay also described how an automotive company always makes accommodations for her, “They always make time for us. But they always, always, even when they have lots of business, they will try to squeeze our vehicles in.”

Lastly, the effort component refers to the amount of resources expended by the other party throughout helping the individual. A comment from Dave illustrates the effort component, “He has just really put forth the extra effort to build that relationship and that trust.”

Previous research indicates that behaviors performed by another party that are non-contractual and within their volitional control positively impact an individual’s (i.e. beneficiary’s) gratitude (Palmatier et al. 2009). This a priori theme was supported; however, the data suggest an addition to the prior conceptualization. More specifically, the data suggest that gratitude is positively affected when the other party engages in extra-role behaviors that are relevant to his/her role or job responsibilities. Therefore the updated conceptualization includes the following: The individual perceives that the other party’s behaviors are non-contractual and within their volitional control, but reasonable to their duties (i.e. job description). This theme was present throughout several interviews. For instance, Matt described how a hotel bartender

engaged in these behaviors, “She recommended all types of restaurants and then she took it a step further and got us some brochures from the concierge. And she gave us directions. Rather than sending us to the concierge or to someone else to tell us how to get there.” In describing her experience with the librarian, Linda commented, “But you know, she could have said, this is what we have. Well let me look over here, or let me look over there. So maybe it’s her job, but I just felt that she was taking the extra time to give me extra service. And I didn’t know where to look and actually the librarian didn’t know how to find it either, and she had to ask another librarian. And the other librarian had to tell her what to do to find the book.” Linda also described how employees for Midwest Express performed these behaviors, “They just make suggestions and you don’t even have to ask, can you recommend a restaurant? Or if I want to go shopping at the airport, they’ll give me suggestions. They just go out of their way.” Leslie described how a painter engaged in these behaviors by taking the initiative to purchase another color of paint rather than having herself perform the purchase, “Like, I didn’t even have to tell him. And my mom wasn’t even here. And they had done the trim work and the color that they had gotten, it wasn’t the right color. It was not white enough. Like it wasn’t this one. So he went ahead and he didn’t even say anything, and so he went ahead and was like oh, they mixed the wrong color, and he went and got it and paid for it, just so it looked the way he wanted it to look.” In describing how a retail associate helped her dad, who inevitably helped her too, Sally mentioned, “I think she did behaviors that were outside her role.”

Need for the benefit, which “refers to the condition in which a person requires or desires something, such that when a need exists, the pertinent item or situation entails greater value” (Palmatier et al. 2009, p. 7), also been shown to impact gratitude. This a priori theme partially supported by the textual data. Of the ten grateful experiences described by informants, seven included a high needed benefit. For instance, John described how his car broke down, “When my car broke down. And I explained to him, oh boy, I’m in trouble. I was in a jam, and I couldn’t go visit relatives.” Kay also described how her son’s car broke down, “I am sure they thought that okay, here’s poor little me, got my college son, who needs a car.” Brooke described how she had recently purchased a new house and needed appliances, “We needed to get the washer, the dryer, the refrigerator and the stove.” However, three participants also described low need situations, which included checking out a book at the library, receiving help from hotel staff and receiving recommendations from airline associates. Given the textual data, it was difficult to assess the degree of gratitude experienced by informants; however, after considering the degree to which informants recalled these experiences and expressed other positive emotions in describing these experiences, it is expected that need for the benefit positively impacts gratitude.

Another a priori theme reflected the cost incurred by the other party in providing a benefit. More specifically, previous research suggests that a positive relationship exists between an individual’s (i.e. beneficiary’s) gratitude and the cost incurred by the other party in providing a benefit (Tesser et al. 1968). The theme was not supported by the current data. Instead, informants indicated that they could be grateful for actions regardless of the cost incurred by the other party. For instance, in describing how a vendor stays in contact and helps out the YMCA, Dave stated, “I don’t think it costs him (the vendor) anything.” Kay also mentioned that cost is irrelevant to her experience with an automotive company, “I don’t think cost is an issue, because I think they (automotive company) try to be quick with everyone’s cars. They realize what cars are nowadays.” Likewise, in describing his experience at a hotel, Matt claimed, “There was zero

cost to the concierge, knowing that they have flyers so they can tell me where to go and how to go to places, and no, I think there was zero cost for concierge to make a dinner reservation. And I think the cost of the Swedish Fish, it was in this recycled cardboard box, I mean it was really yuppied up, and it was like a \$2-4 bag, it couldn't have cost them wholesale, but like \$2." In short, these experiences demonstrate that in situations, the cost incurred by the other party (i.e. benefactor) may be irrelevant to an individual's gratitude experience. Moreover, individuals can have high degrees of gratitude regardless of the cost incurred by the other party.

Emergent Theme – Antecedents of Gratitude

A new antecedent theme for gratitude also emerged from the data—comforting, which is conceptualized as the other party making the individual feel at ease. Several individuals described experiences in which the other party was empathetic and made them feel relaxed. This emergent theme also seems related to the Threat to Self-Esteem theory, which posits that help that is perceived as self-supportive leads to positive, non-defensive reactions (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983). For example, when purchasing four appliances, a television, and a computer, Brooke described how associates at Best Buy comforted her, "I was happy when I left. I felt that they put me at ease. They made me feel good about my purchase." Linda described how the librarian put her at ease by stating, "I was elated that she was willing to get it for me and she said not to worry and that they would have it for me in a couple of days." Tom stated, "I felt grateful. I think anybody that takes the grief out of your life, gives you that feeling of wow, I am grateful for you." Likewise, Sally described how a retail employee comforted her, "I told her about him(her dad) and she (retail employee) said don't worry, my dad's the same way. Like kind of a load off my back for not having to deal with that. And then when I never heard back from him, I was like whoa who!" When relating his previous experience with organizing conventions at hotels to his current experience, Matt mentioned, "I used to do a lot of business with a lot of hotels, and I couldn't think of anything even remotely similar to what we had, and it was never this consistent. I feel like sometimes you really need to fight with hotels and it's a problem. You know, not having to deal with this stupid stuff is nice." Lastly, a comment from Dave also illustrates comforting, "I can relate to him, and I think he feels that he can relate to me."

A Priori Themes – Antecedents of Indebtedness

There were six a priori themes for indebtedness, in which only one was supported and another was partially supported. First of all, recent research indicates that individuals will experience more indebtedness to the extent that the other party communicates that he/she expects the individual to reciprocate (Watkins et al. 2006). This theme was present in several interviews. For instance, in describing her indebtedness experience, Brooke mentioned that employees at a local bank communicated reciprocity expectations, "They definitely encouraged us or welcomed us to get a checking and savings account there. There was definitely a strong encouragement there. In the long run, I think they were looking to get a pay out of it." Likewise, Kay described a cosmetics associate giving her two gifts instead of one, and indicated that the associate's expectations of return were salient. Specifically, Kay mentioned, "She (cosmetics associate) is trying to get you to be a repeat customer."

Prior work has also indicated that benevolent intentions, which refers to the other party being more concerned with the individual's welfare than their own, may positively impact indebtedness. This was partially supported by the data, but refined. More specifically, instead of benevolent intentions, the other party had equivalent intentions, such that the other party wanted to equally benefit themselves and the informant. This is illustrated through several comments similar to those above. For instance, in describing his indebtedness experience with an apartment complex, Matt commented that the other party also intended to benefit themselves stating, "I feel like, they use certain business tactics to bring people in." Brooke mentioned that the bank also had equivalent intentions, "I think they were looking to get a pay out of it." Partial support for benevolent intentions is not surprising given that previous research on indebtedness has revealed mixed findings on this issue. Particularly, Tsang (2006b) demonstrated that indebtedness was not impacted by the other party's benevolent intentions, whereas gratitude was positively affected by the other party's benevolent intentions. Tsang's (2006b) findings conflict with Greenberg (1980), which suggests the positive relationship between benevolent intent and gratitude; however this may be a result of Tsang (2006b) examining both emotions in the same study, whereas Greenberg (1980) only examined indebtedness. The current data are more consistent with Tsang (2006b), such that the other party's benevolent intentions influenced gratitude but equivalent intentions influenced indebtedness.

Emergent Themes – Antecedents of Indebtedness

Five new themes also emerged from the data. First of all, other party norm violations-exchange refers to the other party exhibiting excessive behaviors, including excessive time or effort put forth into the service process. In these situations, informants perceived the other party's behaviors as undesirable and extreme. In addition, these behaviors were not requested or expected informants. Several interviews demonstrated that this norm violated promoted indebtedness. Brooke described how a bank made too many accommodations so that she could have two mortgages. Specifically, Brooke stated, "So they finagled kind of for us. It seemed like they kind of broke a rule for us." Likewise, Kay described how a cosmetics associate gave her more than she deserved, "She gave me double the gift." Leslie also commented that she was given more than she wanted in her experience at a furniture store, "I was strongly encouraged to take the sample items home. I did not request them. So, I didn't really want to take them home." This new theme appears related to the Threat to Self-Esteem theory (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983) in the helping literature, which states that benefactor characteristics or behaviors can influence an individual's reaction to help.

The second theme to emerge from the data included the other party norm violations-role behavior. This theme refers to the other party performing actions outside of relevant job responsibilities. In other words, the individual perceives that the other party is engaging in behavior that is irrelevant to his/her role. Moreover, it appears that indebtedness was elicited in situations where the other parties perform these actions, and this was illustrated throughout several interviews. Andrew mentioned, "I would feel indebted toward that particular person if he would have brought me pizza when he went and got his cell phone charger or something like that. So if he would have actually gone out of his way even further." Brooke also described how a bank manager performed behaviors that were not relevant to his role, "This one guy went out of his way to try to help me get a job. The manager of the bank, he called our house personally

and said that his school was looking for a math teacher. So he passed on my resume to his kid's school. This was just a bank." Similar to the previous emergent theme, this theme also appears to be related to the Threat to Self-Esteem theory (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983), such that benefactor characteristics or behaviors can influence an individual's reaction to help.

Additionally, the third theme to emerge from the data included customer norm violation-exchange. This theme refers to situations in which the individual has violated an exchange expectation by either putting forth too little effort, or by being unable to reciprocate (e.g. purchase). Customer norm violation-exchange seems related to recipient characteristics, which have been demonstrated as having an influence on an individual's reaction to help (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983). This theme was evident throughout several informants' experiences of indebtedness. Brooke described how she put forth very little effort compared to the degree of effort put forth by the bank associates, "They did all of this stuff with very little effort on our part. I mean, we lived all the way across the country and they set all of this up for us. And it took a lot of time on their part." A consumer's inability to reciprocate was also observed. Leslie described her inability to reciprocate to a furniture store, "But I sat down with them, for almost like an hour, and I almost felt guilty because they stayed with me, but I didn't find anything that I liked. And they let me bring home samples to let me try out and everything. And I had to bring them back and had to say, it's not going to work, and I felt really bad." Andrew also mentioned his inability to reciprocate, "Part of me felt like I need to do something to make up for it, more than fixing it. But I couldn't really figure out what I could do. But I felt like if I went in there and talked to him again, it would just make him angrier." Sally also mentioned that she could not reciprocate, "Every time I come in the store, I try on all these things but I never buy anything."

The fourth theme to emerge for indebtedness included customer norm violation-role. This theme refers to an individual failing to engage in expected behaviors. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, this theme also seems related to recipient characteristics, which have been demonstrated as having an influence on an individual's reaction to help (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983). Several descriptions of indebtedness experiences portrayed this theme. Through describing an experience with his mentor, Andrew stated, "I tracked grass clippings on his carpet. And I said, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry this happened. I didn't mean for this happen.'" Additionally, Tom described how he knew the progression of a sales presentation, and that he knew when a particular point of the presentation occurred, the seller was to remain quiet and only let the customer speak. Since Tom was the customer, he decided not to speak to see how the seller would react. Specifically, Tom stated, "So he went through the presentation and there is a spot in the presentation where basically you (sales rep) are not supposed to talk until the client does. So when he got to that spot, and I knew when that spot was, I didn't say anything." In short, Tom decided to be a complicated customer and felt bad for being an atypical customer. Matt also described how his role failure would impact indebtedness, "But I feel that if we were to go out to lunch today, and I forgot my wallet and you paid for it, I feel indebted."

The final theme to emerge from the data included customer vulnerability, which is conceptualized as the situation or the other party makes the individual feel exposed. In other words, the other party knows uncommon information about the individual. This theme appears to relate to self-threat, which can be inherent in helping situations (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-

Alagna 1983). This theme was evident across several experiences of indebtedness. Brooke mentioned that she thought the bank knew her husband's salary, "But, I think they knew about Regan's practice, and that potential was there. I think they knew the money Regan was making and things like that." Likewise, Linda described how she felt vulnerable because she was on a committee with another local business owner, "And because they were on the board with me, I felt obligated to go down and buy clothing at Fishers. Because I knew the people that owned it, and they knew me." Sally also commented on her vulnerability because a sale associate knew her shopping behaviors, "I look at this, or the same purse or whatever, and the same people are waiting on me." Andrew described how working in a small department made him feel exposed, "We have really small department, so we only have a limited number of people to work with, and because I'm working for him." Leslie mentioned how a furniture retailer knew specific information about her, "Knowing that they know I have these pieces, and knowing that I have said in the past that I want to add an additional item."

Inconsistencies in A Priori Antecedent Themes

The preceding findings illustrate that inconsistencies exist between the a priori themes and the themes discovered throughout the textual data. This section will first describe the inconsistencies between the gratitude themes and next describe the inconsistencies between the indebtedness themes.

There was only one inconsistency found between the gratitude themes. Previous research indicates that the cost incurred by the other party in providing the benefit positively affects gratitude. The current findings did not support this theme. It is anticipated that the context of the study may be driving this difference. Particularly, previous research has examined this theme in situations in which the other party is a friend, family member or a stranger. This differs from the current study in which the other party is a provider of a good or a service. As a result of examining gratitude in a commercial context, it is likely that individuals focus less on cost to the other party since the other party is often in business to provide a given service.

Several of the a priori themes for indebtedness were not supported by the textual data. Several explanations can be made for this finding. First of all, locus of causality, which refers to the individual perceiving that he/she was responsible for the other party's help, has been demonstrated to positively impact indebtedness (Greenberg 1980). The data do not support this finding. In fact, several experiences described by informants included the other party imposing help upon the individual. For instance, Brooke described how a bank manager tried to help her find a job without her consent. Leslie mentioned that she felt obligated to take home sample furniture, "I was strongly encouraged to take the sample items home. I did not request them." Similarly, Kay received free cosmetics without asking, "She gave me double the gift. So I felt like, okay." This contrary finding may be due to the specific relationship investigated in this study. Specifically, previous research has primarily investigated locus of causality in contexts in which the other party is a friend, relative, or acquaintance, but not in a commercial context. Likewise, in a typical service context, the consumer seeks help from the other party. However, the preceding examples illustrate how in these instances, the consumer was not seeking these additional benefits or additional help.

Social presence, commonly referred to as cues emitted by the other party, has also been indicated to influence indebtedness. Specifically, social presence refers to the verbal and nonverbal cues provided by witnesses to the receipt of the benefit, co-recipients of the benefit, or the other party (Greenberg 1980). This theme was not supported by the data, which is likely a result of informants discussing experiences in which they were alone. Nonetheless, this theme is similar to the theme expectations of return, such that expectations of return communicated by the other party could be considered a verbal cue provided by the other party, which was supported in the current data.

Research also indicates that the cost incurred by the other party in providing the benefit positively affects indebtedness. Greenberg (1980) suggested that the individual will experience greater indebtedness to the extent that he/she perceives that their net benefits (rewards minus costs) are greater than the net benefits incurred by the other party. Need for the benefit is incorporated into this theme, such that when the individual has a higher need for the benefit, the reward value increases. The cost incurred by the other party was not supported by the data, which also may be due to the context of the current study. Previous research has primarily examined the indebtedness that is experienced in conditions in which the other party is a friend, family member, or stranger, but not in a buying-selling situation. As a result of the current study examining indebtedness in a commercial context, the individual likely expects the other party to provide a certain benefit applicable to the other party's business regardless of cost incurred.

Ethics in business-to-business gift giving was addressed by Dorsch and Kelley (1994). Particularly, Dorsch and Kelley (1994) suggest that purchasing executives will experience higher levels of indebtedness to the extent that they perceive the gift as being ethical (e.g. benefiting the organization). The measures of indebtedness included in their study are likely problematic (See Appendix D) and inconsistent with the conceptualization of indebtedness, which may contribute to the lack of support for this theme. Additionally, the current study solely examines indebtedness in a business-to-consumer context, which may also explain the differing results.

Summary

In summary, this section addressed the fundamental deficiency of unresolved antecedents of gratitude and indebtedness. Particularly, this section discussed themes that appeared to promote gratitude, such as the other party's benevolent intentions, which included protection and personalization components; the other party's role integrity; the other party's relevant extra-role behavior; the individual's need for the benefit; and the other party comforting the individuals. This section also discussed themes that seemed to elicit indebtedness, which included: increasing expectations of return; equivalent intentions; other party norm violation-exchange; other party norm violation-role; customer norm violation-exchange; customer norm violation-role; and the other party making the individual feel vulnerable.

Consequence Themes

The section also addresses the third and fourth deficiencies in the literature by examining the consequences of gratitude and indebtedness and by offering an understanding of the role of these emotions in marketing. Table 11 illustrates that all of the a priori consequence themes for

Table 10: Examples of Confirmed or Emergent Themes Reflecting Antecedents of Gratitude and Indebtedness

	Theme	Conceptualization	Examples
Gratitude	Benevolent Intentions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Protection ➤ Personalization 	The individual ⁹ perceives that the other party ¹⁰ has good intentions by looking out for the individual's best interests; rendering service specific to the individual's needs; or by wanting the individual to benefit.	<p>I think it's a good intention. They don't want more than they need to have. (F58)</p> <p>Oh, no question. It's not just him asking me if I like the way it looks, it more like he will tell me, "no you shouldn't do it this way, and this is why." So the answer is he is looking out for your best interests, irrespective of you wants. Because you may want this and he knows that that would be a stupid thing to do, and he will tell you this and tell you why. (M50)</p> <p>They don't say, "What's your name?" Instead, they say, "Hi, how are you today Linda?" (F65.commit)</p>
	Role Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Time ➤ Efficiency ➤ Flexibility ➤ Effort 	The other party enacts his/her role to an outstanding degree by appropriately surpassing an individual's expectations of the amount of time, efficiency, flexibility or effort put forth into the service process.	<p>But the bartender was great repeatedly for extended periods of time. (M29)</p> <p>But I was just amazed by the way he stuck with it. Like the whole time. He didn't flake out on me." (M34)</p> <p>They get at it much faster than what I would expect. (F58)</p> <p>They extended our time frame. Like usually they have 60 days, but I think they gave us an extra month or an extra 45 days to return this stuff. (F31)</p> <p>He has just really put forth the extra effort to build that relationship and that trust. (M40)</p>
	Relevant Extra-Role Behavior	The individual perceives that the other party's behaviors are non-contractual and within their volitional control, but reasonable to their duties (i.e. job description).	<p>She recommended all types of restaurants and then she took it a step further and got us some brochures from the concierge. And she gave us directions. Rather than sending us to the concierge or to someone else to tell us how to get there. (M29)</p> <p>I didn't know where to look and actually the librarian didn't know how to find it either, and she had to ask another librarian. And the other librarian had to tell her what to do to find the book. (F65.expl)</p>
	Need for Benefit	"Refers to the condition in which a person requires or desires something, such that when a need exists, the pertinent item or situation entails	<p>We needed to get the washer, the dryer, the refrigerator and the stove. (F31)</p> <p>When my car broke down. And I explained to him, oh boy, I'm in trouble. I was in a jam, and I couldn't go visit relatives. (M69)</p>

⁹ Individual is synonymous to customer, beneficiary, or recipient of the benefit.

¹⁰ Other party is synonymous to the service provider, benefactor, donor, employee or firm.

Table 10 continued

		greater value” (Palmatier et al. 2009, p. 7)	
	Comforting	The other party makes the individual feel at ease	<p>I was happy when I left. I felt that they put me at ease. They made me feel good about my purchase. (F31)</p> <p>I was elated that she was willing to get it for me and she said not to worry and that they would have it for me in a couple of days. (F65.expl)</p>
Indebtedness	Increasing expectations of return	The other party communicates that he/she expects the individual to reciprocate (Watkins et al. 2006).	<p>They definitely encouraged us or welcomed us to get a checking and savings account there. There was definitely a strong encouragement there. (F31)</p> <p>She is trying to get you to be a repeat customer. (F58)</p>
	Equivalent Intentions	The other party was equally concerned with the individual’s and his own welfare.	<p>I think they were looking to get a pay out of it. (F31)</p> <p>I feel like they use certain business tactics to bring people in. (M29)</p>
	Other party norm violation (exchange)	The other party exhibits excessive behaviors, including too much time or effort put forth into the service process.	<p>So they finagled kind of for us. It seemed like they kind of broke a rule for us. (F31)</p> <p>She gave me double the gift. So I felt like, okay. (F58)</p>
	Other party norm violation (role)	The other party’s actions are outside of relevant job responsibilities.	<p>I would feel indebted toward that particular person if he would have brought me pizza when he went and got his cell phone charger or something like that. So if he would have actually gone out of his way even further and did. (M34)</p> <p>And like the manager of the bank, he called our house personally and said that his school was looking for a math teacher. (F31)</p>
	Customer norm violation (exchange)	The individual has violated an exchange expectation by either putting forth too little effort, or by being unable to reciprocate (e.g. purchase).	<p>They did all of this stuff with very little effort on our part. I mean, we lived all the way across the country and they set all of this up for us. And it took a lot of time on their part. (F31)</p> <p>But I sat down with them, for almost like an hour, and I almost felt guilty because they stayed with me, but I didn’t find anything that I liked. (F29)</p>
	Customer norm violation (role)	The individual has failed to engage in expected behaviors.	<p>I tracked grass clippings on his carpet. And I said, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry this happened. I didn’t mean for this happen.” (M34)</p> <p>So he went through the presentation and there is a spot in the presentation where basically you (sales rep) are not supposed to talk until the client does. So when he got to that spot, and I knew when that spot was, I didn’t say anything. (M50)</p>
	Customer Vulnerability	The situation or the other party makes the individual feel exposed.	<p>I think they knew the money Regan was making and things like that. (F31)</p> <p>I look at this, or the same purse or whatever, and the same people are waiting on me. (F47)</p>

gratitude were supported and that two new themes emerged. In addition, support for indebtedness themes varied, such that the data supported two a priori themes, but did not support another. The following section will first present the a priori and emergent themes for gratitude, then describe the a priori theme for indebtedness, and finally conclude with a discussion regarding the inconsistencies of a priori and emergent themes.

Table 11: Primary Consequences of Gratitude and Indebtedness

	Theme	Existing Conceptualization	F/P/N ¹¹	Extended / New Theme	New Conceptualization
Gratitude	Trust	“Confidence in a partner’s reliability and integrity” (Palmatier et al. 2009, p. 4).	F		
	Affective Commitment	“An enduring bond, a sense of current and continued belonging or emotional attachment” (Raggio and Folse 2009, p.459).	F		
	Purchase Intent (pro-social / helping behavior) ¹²	The individual ¹³ (e.g. customer) plans to purchase from the other party ¹⁴ (e.g. service provider) in the future.	F		
	Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	The individual recommends the other party to others.	F	Customer Benevolence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-Role Behavior • WOM or Advocate 	The individual engages in discretionary, verbal or physical actions that demonstrate his/her admiration toward the other party.
				Willingness-to-Pay	The individual would agree to pay a price premium for the other party’s service.
				Preferential Treatment	The other party is the primary option in the individual’s consideration set.

¹¹ F represents that the a priori theme was fully supported in the interviews. P represents that the a priori theme was partially supported in the interviews. N represents that the a priori theme was not supported in the interviews.

¹² Morales (2005) also examined agent ratings at a dependent variable, however no conceptualization of agent ratings was provided.

¹³ Individual is synonymous to customer, beneficiary, or recipient of the benefit.

¹⁴ Other party is synonymous to the service provider, benefactor, donor, employee or firm.

Table 11 continued

Indebtedness	Purchase	The individual reciprocates by purchasing from the other party.	F		
	Avoidance Motivations (Lack of Prosocial behavior/Less Likely to Help the Benefactor)	The individual indicates that he/she would be more likely to avoid and less likely to help the other party (Watkins et al. 2006).	F	Lack of Customer Benevolence Avoidance Behaviors WOM Avoidance	The individual does not engage in discretionary, verbal or physical actions that demonstrate his/her admiration toward the other party.
	Cognitive Restructuring	“Re-examining cognitions that determine the magnitude of indebtedness” (Greenberg 1980, p. 20).	N		

A Priori Themes – Consequences of Gratitude

Prior research indicates that gratitude positively influences trust—“confidence in a partner’s reliability and integrity,” (Palmatier et al. 2009, p.4). This was largely supported through the data. For instance, in describing his relationship with a vendor, Dave mentioned, “There is a lot of trust there. I give him a key and he comes in and out. And we don’t do that with hardly any vendors. And because of the fact that I feel that he has proven to me that he is trustworthy.” Similarly, Kay described how she thought the mechanics at a local automotive repair business were very trustworthy. Kay stated, “I think that they are very honest with everybody.”

Previous research has demonstrated how gratitude can positively impact affective commitment. Affective commitment is conceptualized as “an enduring bond, a sense of current and continued belonging or emotional attachment,” (Raggio and Folse 2009, p. 459). Commitment was evident in several interviews. For example, Kay demonstrated her commitment through the statement, “We always bring our cars there.” Likewise, John described his comment, “He probably gets about 99% of my business. But there’s that 1%, because you can’t go to him because he’s so busy.”

The extant literature indicates that gratitude positively influences purchase intentions (Palmatier et al. 2009). Purchase intent is conceptualized as the individual¹⁵ (e.g. customer) plans to purchase from the other party¹⁶ (e.g. service provider) in the future. Brooke described her purchase behavior with Best Buy through the statement, “We went back. We upgraded the TV, which I guess cost us a little more money. And, we just recently bought an Ipad there.” Dave described his continued use of a specific vendor, “He has probably done have a dozen painting jobs here.” John mentioned how he continues to go to the same mechanic, “I keep going back to him.” Linda stated that she would like to continue patronizing the library, “I want to come back.” Additionally, when discussing whether Leslie might choose the painting business again in the future she stated, “Oh, call him. Oh yeah! I would ask him to do more, I just don’t have the money!” Likewise, when asking Sally whether she would purchase from Apple again, she stated, “Oh yeah. I’d even buy a service like he (Sally’s dad) bought.” Lastly, Matt also revealed that he stay at a hotel again. Specifically, he stated, “Absolutely. I would stay there again.”

Prior research also indicates that gratitude positively influences word-of-mouth behavior. Therefore, gratitude prompts an individual to speak positively about the other party to others (Soscia 2007). This was supported by the data; however word-of-mouth behavior was only one component of a broader emergent theme, customer benevolence. Customer benevolence is conceptualized as the individual engaging in discretionary, verbal or physical actions that demonstrate his/her admiration toward the other party. Therefore, this theme includes customers’ positive verbal actions, including dispersing positive word-of-mouth about an exchange party, and also physical behaviors, such as extra-role behaviors or gift gifting.

Several informants described how they often spread positive word-of-mouth about an exchange party. This included conditions in which their opinion was sought out and conditions in which the individual involuntarily provided information. Kay mentioned that she continually tells others about an automotive business, “We appreciate what they have done for us and we try to promote them. We always tell friends to go to Anderson’s. So I always tell people to go to Anderson’s. I always do.” Likewise, Linda described how she tells others to look up Midwest Express, “So if somebody says, well, I want to go here. I will say, well, see if Midwest goes there. You know they are not any more expensive than anyone else and it’s a great airline.” Sally described how her dad sought out spreading positive word-of-mouth about the sales associate at Apple, “He (Sally’s dad) came in, he went and found her (sales associate), and found her manager, and told her manager that she needed a raise.” Additionally, Sally also spread positive word-of-mouth through the interview, “Her name is A.J. If you need to go buy a computer, go see her!” Matt mentioned that he has recommended and will continue to recommend a hotel. Matt stated, “A friend of mine posted on facebook, something about knowing a great hotel resort somewhere north of Atlanta and south of somewhere and I wrote like a little paragraph of how great this place was. You know if it was a year from now, and I knew someone that was going to Hilton Head, I would certainly take the time to look up the hotel to find the name of the hotel that I stayed at. So I certainly recommend that hotel.” Brooke also stated how she tells others to shop at Best Buy, “And I’ve told people, or anytime that I hear anybody looking for new appliances, I tell them they should go to Best Buy because, well I always recommend Best Buy.”

¹⁵ Individual is synonymous to customer, beneficiary, or recipient of the benefit.

¹⁶ Other party is synonymous to the service provider, benefactor, donor, employee or firm.

Andrew also mentioned how he spread positive word-of-mouth about an internet and cable service provider, “I’m pretty sure that I told other people about it, and how impressed I was with this guy’s willingness to do this.” Lastly, after asking Tom if he recommends a home builder, Tom stated, “Oh all the time. In fact, my response is, if you get anyone else to build your home, you are an idiot.”

The second dimension of customer benevolence included physical actions that benefit the other party. Several examples portray this theme, which often included gift-giving. For instance Kay described how her husband gave the automotive business a Christmas gift, “Mark, (the interviewee’s husband), got them a gift certificate at Christmas time.” Matt described how he wrote a letter to the bartender’s manager, “I actually sent in an email to the manager to let him know how great she was.” Sally also mentioned that she wrote a letter to the store manager at Apple, “I wrote a letter to her(sales associate) manager just telling her how much I appreciated her. I didn’t feel like I needed to write the letter because I already told her thank you over the phone. And my dad had already gone in there and told her manager to give her a raise, so I just wanted to write her a letter of recommendation. I never felt like I owed them that letter.” John mentioned that he gave his mechanic a bottle of wine, “I had a bottle of Asti, and I took it out and gave it to him for Christmas but I didn’t have any work to give him.” Linda mentioned that she helps the Country Club by returning with several guests and providing large tips, “By returning several times, by giving them a little more tip, and by bringing guests.” Andrew also described how he tried to help the cable provider by finding an old phone charger that could possibly charge the provider’s phone, “And his cell phone was dead, and he had a black jack 2, you know one of those phones from a couple years ago. So I went out to my car, because it (phone charger) was still in my car.” Lastly, Dave illustrated his benevolence by helping the wife of one of his vendors (i.e. the painter) obtain a job. Dave stated, “His wife recently lost her job about a week or two ago. I said, well what happened to your wife? What business was she in? And he (the vendor) said that she was in the banking industry. I said, well how can I help you? I’ve got a lot of bankers on the board, I have connections with some members. So he sent me her resume and he told me a little bit about herself, and I haven’t met her yet. But the plan is to share that with the CEOs of a couple of banks that are on my board to try to give her a job, or have them at least look at it (her resume) to try to give her a job.”

Emergent Themes – Consequences of Gratitude

In regards to the consequences of gratitude, two new themes also emerged from the data. First, preferential treatment was the second theme to emerge from the data. Preferential treatment is conceptualized as the other party existing as the primary option in the individual’s consideration set. Across several instances, after experiencing gratitude, individuals provide preferential treatment to their benefactor (i.e. other party). Brooke indicated that her search would start at Best Buy when searching for appliances in the future. Brooke stated, “I think in the future, if I wanted to make big purchases, I would start there. I would certainly start at Best Buy.” Linda also described how her search for flights would begin at Midwest Express, “The first place I look Dora, is Midwest Express. I always look to see if they are going where I am going. And then after than I go to Delta, ugh.” Dave mentioned that a painter is his first contact in soliciting bids. Specifically Dave stated, “He’s top of mind for me. I think of him first.” Moreover, Dave also described how he gives this painter preferential treatment in the bidding

process. Dave stated, “If it’s over a \$1000 we are required to have at least three bids. But he’s always in the bidding process. And, he kind of knows what we are looking for, and the price we are looking for. So he usually gets the bid. But I do have to call two other people, so there are three bids to look at.”

The second theme to emerge from the data was willingness-to-pay, which refers to an individual agreeing to pay a price premium for the other party’s service (Soscia 2007). This theme was evident throughout several interviews. For instance, Kay stated that she would be willing to pay more for services rendered by a mechanic. Kay stated, “We would be willing to pay more money, but they won’t take anymore.” Likewise, Matt commented that he would also be willing to pay more money to stay at the same hotel. He claimed, “I think if I went online right now and found 3 hotels for \$130 a night, and this one was \$160 or \$170, and I was going to Hilton Head, I would stay at that one. I would be okay with paying more for it, when normally I would just take whatever is the best deal within a certain quality.”

A Priori Themes – Consequences of Indebtedness

Prior research has revealed mixed results regarding the outcomes of indebtedness. Particularly, previous research also suggests that indebtedness is positively related to reciprocity (Dorsch and Kelley 1994; Greenberg 1980). It is argued that when an individual experiences indebtedness, he or she rids the feeling through either reciprocating or through engaging in cognitive restructuring. Nonetheless, in a recent study conducted by Watkins et al. (2006), the results indicated that experiencing indebtedness rather than gratitude, leads to avoidance motivations towards the other party. Furthermore, participants also revealed that they would be less likely to help the other party in the future (Watkins et al. 2006). Thus, prior work suggests indebtedness influences reciprocity, yet at the same time, indebtedness can lead to avoidance behaviors. The current data provide a further explanation for the mixed findings.

Consistent with prior work, reciprocity (i.e. purchasing) was present in indebtedness situations. Particularly, previous research suggests that purchasing is a form of reciprocal behavior that is motivated by indebtedness (Dorsch and Kelley 1994), and this was supported by the data. However, it is important to note that purchasing was the only means by which informants reciprocated in indebtedness experiences; whereas a variety of reciprocal behaviors were emphasized in gratitude experiences. For instance, Linda mentioned, “I think out of all the years that I was on the CBA, I bought only two things there.” Likewise, Tom stated that he bought, “one knife set.” After I asked Kay about her behavior with the cosmetic associate, Kay commented, “Yeah, I purchased something, but in the future, I only will if I absolutely need something.” Moreover, Kay’s comment illustrates that after reciprocating, individuals engaged in avoidance behaviors. This finding will be illustrated in the subsequent paragraph.

Consistent with Watkins et al. (2006), indebtedness included avoidance motivations, which is conceptualized as the individual indicates that he/she would be more likely to avoid and less likely to help the other party. However, this was only one dimension of a larger theme labeled lack of customer benevolence. Lack of customer benevolence is conceptualized as the individual does not engage in discretionary, verbal or physical actions that demonstrate his/her admiration toward the other party. Therefore, this theme includes both a behavioral component,

such as the lack of helping behaviors, and a vocal component, such as the lack of spreading positive word-of-mouth. Both vocal and physical actions were largely evident across the interviews. Tom described how he was reluctant to refer the sales agent to his friends, "Because then you are very particular about who you are going to inflict this sales presentation on. Because at that point, you are like, I don't want to send an intrusion on somebody else's life. And I called people up to let them know that I gave him their names." Tom also compared his experience of indebtedness to gratitude, which also indicated his reluctance to spread positive word-of-mouth, "But I don't go out there searching for people to tell about the product. But sure, when it comes up, then yeah. It's always been a good product. It didn't create that sort of emotion where I wanted to go out and tell the world about it." Matt also mentioned that his referral behavior is much lower when experiencing indebtedness compared to when he experiences gratitude, "It really depends what you are looking for. If you are looking for a roommate you could probably find something nicer for cheaper. But I'm not typing up, hey check out this place brochure or anything like that. Like I probably would do in the other situation." Lastly, Kay mentioned that she does not refer other people to the cosmetic associate that she described in her indebtedness experience. After asking Kay whether she has referred her friends to the associate, Kay answered, "No. No, most people don't go get Lancome or Clinique." Moreover, when considering gratitude experiences and how individuals engaged in benevolent behaviors to help the other party, it was interesting that none of these behaviors were evident in the indebtedness experiences. Particularly, no informant described helping the other party through engaging in atypical helping behavior or gift-giving.

In summary, the results provided further clarification regarding how indebtedness includes reciprocity as well avoidance behaviors. Additionally, the single form of reciprocity that was uncovered is consistent with Fredrickson's (2004) claim that gratitude broadens and builds cognitive and social resources, which in turn, leads to creative and various reciprocal behaviors, while indebtedness, with its negative connotation, ought to be associated with tit-for-tat reciprocity. Considering that the conceptualization of gratitude includes a positive focus on the other party and the intent to benefit the other, it seems reasonable for individuals to go to great lengths while reciprocating, which was witnessed through purchase intent, customer benevolence, preferential treatment and willingness-to-pay. These extravagant outcomes are a result of individuals wanting to enhance the other party's welfare. Likewise, considering that the conceptualization of indebtedness includes a focus on the self and the intent to benefit the self, it seems reasonable that the behavior mentioned throughout this section negligibly helps the other party. Instead, individuals are engaging in the least costly behaviors to rid this feeling and to improve their own well-being. Furthermore, after reciprocating, individuals engage in avoidance behaviors to further reduce any potential harm to the self.

Inconsistencies in A Priori Consequence Themes

Table 11 indicates one inconsistency between the a priori themes and the themes uncovered in the textual data. Particularly, prior work has indicated that individuals attempt to reduce indebtedness by either reciprocating or through cognitive restructuring. Cognitive restructuring refers to individuals reexamining and restructuring previous cognitions that caused him/her to feel indebted. Restructured cognitions may cause individuals to conclude that: 1) the degree of benefits received was not as large as initially perceived, 2) the donor's costs were less

than they were initially believed, 3) the locus of causality of the donor's actions was more external than they initially thought (i.e. the individual did not ask for the help or benefit), 4) the donor's motives were not as altruistic as they originally believed, or 5) they wrongly perceived the opinions of relevant others about the degree to which they are obligated to repay the donor (Greenberg 1980). Researchers have primarily focused on individual's attempts to reciprocate rather than their attempts to restructure previous cognitions. Moreover, prior research lacks empirical support for this theme and measuring changes in cognitions is highly problematic. It has been claimed that "propositions concerning cognitive restructuring must be regarded as speculative" (Greenberg 1980, p. 21). Thus, considering these issues, it is not surprising that cognitive restructuring was not evident in the current research.

Table 12: Examples of Confirmed or Emergent Themes Reflecting Consequences of Gratitude and Indebtedness

	Theme	Conceptualization	Examples
Gratitude	Trust	"Confidence in a partner's reliability and integrity," (Palmatier et al. 2009, p. 4).	There is a lot of trust there. I give him a key and he comes in and out. And we don't do that with hardly any vendors. And because of the fact that I feel that he has proven to me that he is trustworthy. (M40) I think that they are very honest with everybody. (F58)
	Affective Commitment	"An enduring bond, a sense of current and continued belonging or emotional attachment," (Raggio and Folse 2009, p.459).	We always bring our cars there. (F58) He probably gets about 99% of my business. But there's that 1 percent, because you can't go to him because he's so busy. (M69)
	Purchase Intent (pro-social / helping behavior)	The individual ¹⁷ (e.g. customer) plans to purchase from the other party ¹⁸ (e.g. service provider) in the future.	We went back. We upgraded the TV, which I guess cost us a little more money. And, we just recently bought an Ipad there. (F31) He has probably done have a dozen painting jobs here. (M40)
	Willingness-to-Pay	The individual would agree to pay a price premium for the other party's service.	We would be willing to pay more money, but they won't take anymore. (F58) I think if I went online right now and found 3 hotels for \$130 a night, and this one was \$160 or \$170, and I was going to Hilton Head, I would stay at that one. I would be okay with paying more for it, when normally I would just take whatever is the best deal within a certain quality. (M29)
	Preferential Treatment	The other party is the primary option in the individual's	I think in the future, if I wanted to make big purchases, I would start there. I would certainly start at Best Buy. (F31)

¹⁷ Individual is synonymous to customer, beneficiary, or recipient of the benefit.

¹⁸ Other party is synonymous to the service provider, benefactor, donor, employee or firm.

Table 12 continued

		consideration set.	<p>I think of him first. (M40)</p> <p>The first place I look Dora, is Midwest Express. I always look to see if they are going where I am going. (F65)</p>
	<p>Customer Benevolence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-Role Behavior • WOM or Advocate 	The individual engages in discretionary, verbal or physical actions that demonstrate his/her admiration toward the other party.	<p>I had a bottle of Asti, and I took it out and gave it to him for Christmas but I didn't have any work to give him. (M69)</p> <p>We always tell friends "Go to Anderson's." So I always tell people to go to Anderson's. I always do. (F58)</p> <p>A friend of mine posted on facebook, something about knowing a great hotel resort somewhere north of Atlanta and south of somewhere and I wrote like a little paragraph of how great this place was. So I certainly recommend that hotel. (M29)</p>
Indebtedness	Purchase	The individual reciprocates by purchasing from the other party.	<p>Yeah, I purchased something, but in the future, I only will if I absolutely need something. (F58)</p> <p>I think out of all the years that I was on the CBA, I bought only two things there. (F65)</p>
	<p>Lack of Customer Benevolence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance Behaviors • WOM Avoidance 	The individual does not engage in discretionary, verbal or physical actions that demonstrate his/her admiration toward the other party.	<p>Because then you are very particular about who you are going to inflict this sales presentation on. Because at that point, you are like, I don't want to send an intrusion on somebody else's life. And I called people up to let them know that I gave him their names. (M50)</p> <p>It really depends what you are looking for. If you are looking for a roommate you could probably find something nicer for cheaper. But I'm not typing up, hey check out this place brochure or anything like that. Like I probably would do in the other situation. (M29)</p>

Summary

In summary, this section addressed the fundamental deficiencies by shedding light on the consequences of gratitude and indebtedness. In addition, this section provided clarity as to how these emotions may be positioned in a model of relationship marketing. The textual data suggest that gratitude appears to promote various reciprocal behaviors, which was evident in the following themes: purchase intent, willingness-to-pay, preferential treatment and customer benevolence. Several other positive outcomes were mentioned when discussing grateful experiences, including trust and affective commitment. Furthermore, narrow means of reciprocity and a lack of customer benevolence were present in the indebtedness experiences.

Conceptual Framework

The existing themes were positioned in a conceptual model relevant to the marketing discipline. First, as described in the conceptualization section, the results indicated that the conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness possess four dimensions: affective, behavioral, cognitive and duration. Gratitude and indebtedness differed from each other along each of these dimensions. After receiving a benefit from another party, consumers have an emotional response, which refers to the affective dimension; partake in some sort of action, which refers to the behavioral dimension; have several thoughts about themselves or the other party, which refers to the cognitive dimension; and the emotion remains either temporarily or enduringly. The concept of simultaneously measuring affective, cognitive and behavioral responses is a common occurrence in marketing; therefore the results appear well suited for further examination of gratitude and indebtedness in a vast array of marketing phenomena.

In addition, the findings above indicate that the Threat to Self-Esteem Model (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983), which was developed to explain recipient reactions to aid, is relevant to consumer's experiences of gratitude and indebtedness. Self-esteem theories (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983) propose that individuals are motivated to uphold favorable self-attitudes and to protect the self-concept against alteration, diminution, or insult. Any information that jeopardizes feelings of self-worth promotes anxiety and facilitates effort to restore self-esteem. Specifically, the Threat to Self-Esteem model argues that helping situations contain a combination of positive and negative self-related elements. The extent to which the overall helping situation possesses more positive or negative self-related components determines how the recipient will react. When the helping situation possesses more self-supportive (i.e. positive) components, the recipient is likely to react non-defensively; whereas when the helping situation contains more self-threatening (i.e. negative) elements, the recipient is likely to react defensively. It is the situational conditions (e.g. aid characteristics, donor characteristics, and context characteristics) associated with the aid as well as recipient characteristics that determine the magnitude of relative self-threat or self-support inherent in the aid situation (See Appendix E).

Since informants were discussing situations in which they were provided a benefit by another party, which can be considered a helping situation, the Threat to Self-Esteem model is applicable to the context of the current study. By adapting the Threat to Self-Esteem model to the current research, it is positioned that gratitude is elicited when there is a high degree of self-support inherent in the aid situation (i.e. low relative threat to recipient's self-esteem), whereas indebtedness is elicited when there is a high degree of self-threat inherent in the aid situation (i.e. high relative threat to recipient's self-esteem). The themes discussed above have been integrated into the framework, titled "The Role of Gratitude and Indebtedness in Marketing Exchanges" is provided in Figure 1. These themes have been classified as functioning as an antecedent, a consequence, or an element to the conceptualization of gratitude or indebtedness. Consistent with the Threat to Self-Esteem model, the outcomes of gratitude were non-defensive, whereas the outcomes of indebtedness were defensive. Additionally, this framework demonstrates that gratitude and indebtedness are related to contrasting cognitions and behaviors, suggesting that gratitude and indebtedness are in fact distinct emotions. As a result of the established framework,

researchers and practitioners can further comprehend how these emotions are generated as well as how these emotions influence significant outcomes.

DISCUSSION

This essay was conducted for the purpose of furthering our understanding of gratitude and indebtedness in marketing exchanges. In agreement with this fundamental objective, this essay sought to: 1) Conceptualize, differentiate and detail the relevance of gratitude and indebtedness; 2) Develop a nomological model for the study of gratitude and indebtedness in marketing, incorporating the causes and effects of these emotions, in addition to moderating constructs; and 3) Highlight the significance of gratitude and indebtedness for marketing practitioners and researchers. Consistent with these ambitions, a qualitative study was conducted. Data was collected from ten phenomenological interviews, which was analyzed through an iterative hermeneutical approach. Currently, the marketing discipline lacks consensus regarding the conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness, no comprehensive measures or scales exist for each emotion and little is known as to how these emotions should be positioned into a nomological network of relationship marketing. The current study addresses these issues by being the first marketing research to simultaneously examine gratitude and indebtedness in marketing exchanges, therefore promoting an understanding of the conceptualizations, antecedents and consequences of each emotion.

The following discussion is divided into two sections. To begin with, this discussion will present the theoretical contributions made by this research. These contributions include addressing the four fundamental deficiencies outlined in the motivation section of this essay. First, the updated conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness will be discussed. Second, revisions to the measurement of these emotions will be detailed. Third, antecedents and consequences of each emotion will be discussed. Fourth, the positioning of these emotions into a nomological model of relationship marketing will be described. In closing, this essay will detail the managerial implications offered by this research.

Theoretical Contributions

This research offers several theoretical contributions by addressing the four fundamental deficiencies present in the literature. The following section will highlight how the current research addresses these deficiencies.

Issue One: Ill-Defined Conceptualizations

Extant marketing and psychology research on gratitude and indebtedness indicates that there is no consensus regarding the conceptualizations of gratitude and indebtedness. In addition, marketing researchers continually use these emotions interchangeably. This research indicates that equating gratitude and indebtedness is highly problematic. Although gratitude and indebtedness both affect reciprocal behavior, they possess different conceptualizations, antecedents and consequences.

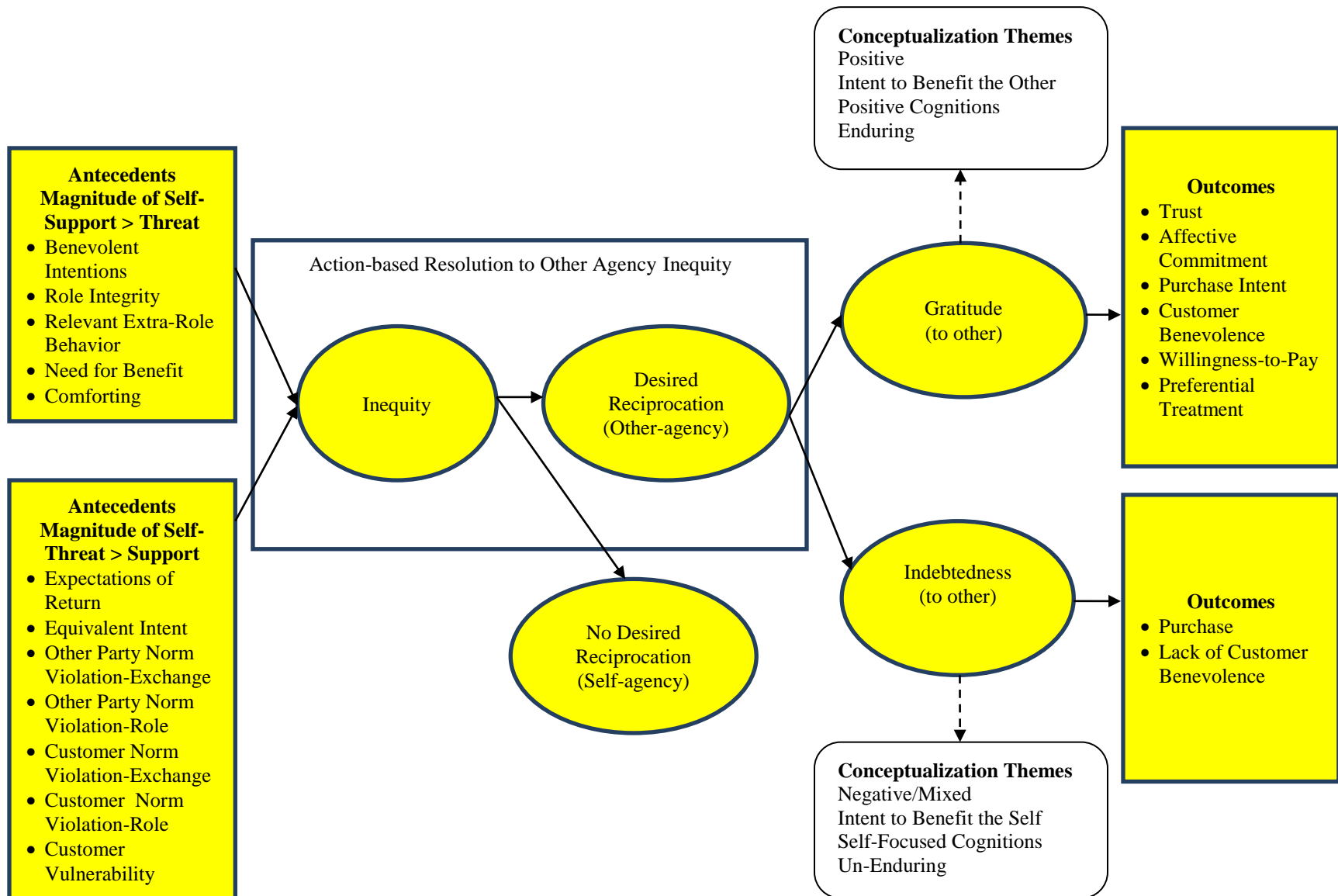


Figure 1: The Role of Gratitude and Indebtedness in Marketing Exchange

The data revealed that gratitude can be conceptualized as a positive, enduring emotion that is accompanied by positive attributions of the other party and the intent to benefit the other party. This revised conceptualization reflects two new critical components, the duration of the emotion and associated cognitions, and details the intent of the reciprocal behavior. Particularly, gratitude is an enduring emotion, such that individuals can be grateful for extended periods of time; positive thoughts about the other party are concurrent with experiencing the gratitude; and experiencing the emotion stimulates reciprocal behavior that is intended to benefit the other party.

Contrastingly, but as expected, indebtedness is conceptualized as a mixed or negative, un-enduring emotion that is accompanied by thoughts about the self and the inequity within the relationship between themselves and the other party, and the intent to benefit one's own welfare. Therefore, in contrast with gratitude, the textual data reveal that when experiencing indebtedness, the individual focuses on the self in one's cognitions and intentions. Particularly, the individual is thinking about how they feel and the imbalance with their relationship with the other party. Additionally, the individual intends to reciprocate to benefit their own welfare. Therefore, when experiencing indebtedness, the individual plans to act in order to make them feel better about themselves rather than helping the other party for the sake of the other.

Issue Two: Problematic Measures

As a result of these emotions being poorly defined and used interchangeably, previous marketing research has produced problematic measures of gratitude and indebtedness. The extant literature lacks a comprehensive scale for each emotion, and often uses thankful, appreciative, and grateful to measure gratitude; and indebted and obligated to measure indebtedness. In order to comprehensively measure gratitude and indebtedness, it is suggested that future research develop measures to reflect all four dimensions of each emotion discovered in this essay: affect, behavior, cognition and duration. Moreover, the updated conceptualizations of each emotion indicate that extant research fails to fully capture each emotion; that indebtedness is not equivalent to the norm or reciprocity; and that summing measures of gratitude and indebtedness into one overarching construct is highly problematic given that these emotions have several differences.

Issue Three: Unresolved Antecedents and Consequences

Previous research has demonstrated several issues regarding the antecedents and consequences of gratitude and indebtedness. There are conflicting findings, limited constructs studied, limited empirical validation, and validity concerns regarding the antecedents and consequences of each emotion.

First of all, prior work has revealed mixed results as to how the other party's benevolent intentions impact gratitude and indebtedness. Extant literature indicates that gratitude and indebtedness are both positively affected by the other party's benevolent intentions or that gratitude is solely affected by the other party's benevolent intentions. A limitation of this prior research is the failure to examine equitable or mutual intentions. The results of the current study

demonstrate that gratitude is positively affected by another's benevolent intentions, while indebtedness is affected by another's equivalent intentions.

Research has also demonstrated mixed results regarding how these emotions influence reciprocal behavior. The results of the current study offered clarification for the mixed findings, such that both emotions were associated with reciprocity; however the extent to which an individual engaged in reciprocal behavior varied between the two emotions. Particularly, when experiencing indebtedness, individuals reciprocate equivalent to the value provided in the original benefit, and are reciprocating to rid the self rather than to benefit the other. Gratitude was associated with a wide array of behaviors (e.g. purchase intent, customer benevolence, preferential treatment and willingness-to-pay), while indebtedness was only associated with making a purchase. Moreover, individuals that reciprocated out of indebtedness engaged in avoidance behaviors following their behavior.

Extant research has also investigated limited constructs has potential antecedents and consequences and indebtedness, and as shown in Table 9 and Table 11, several additional antecedents and consequences emerged from the data. In addition, the results supported much of the prior work on gratitude; but failed to support much of the prior work on indebtedness. It is expected that these differences stem from the commercial context of the current study, the lack of empirical validation for a priori themes, and that lack of prior research simultaneously examining both emotions.

Issue Four: Relationship Marketing and Emotions

Extant marketing research often uses reciprocity as the underlying theoretical foundation for relationship marketing activities without delving into how emotions may elicit reciprocal behaviors. Therefore, marketing research has not incorporated gratitude and indebtedness into an overall model of relationship marketing. As shown in Figure 1, this research fulfills that gap by illustrating how customer interactions with other parties (i.e. service providers, firms, or employees) can influence customer felt gratitude or indebtedness, which in turn, affect several significant outcomes. To the author's knowledge, this is the first research to integrate the threat to self-esteem model with marketing constructs. It is suggested that future research empirically examine this model to further understand the significance of these emotions.

Managerial Contributions

This research offers substantial managerial implications, especially in the domains of 1) retailing, services and sales, 2) relationship marketing and 3) customer helping behavior. The following section will detail how the current research contributes to each of these domains.

Retailing, Services and Sales

Through further understanding customer-employee interactions, this essay offers several contributions which are highly applicable to the retailing, services and sales domains of marketing. By identifying behaviors that elicit gratitude and indebtedness, this essay assists organizations that desire to develop strategies aimed to leverage customer felt gratitude or

mitigate customer felt indebtedness. Most suitably, this essay substantially advances the retailing, services and sales literature by identifying behaviors that organizations may want to exemplify in interactions with customers. Front-line employees (FLE) (i.e. sales representatives, service providers, contact employees, sales associates, etc.) often engage in interactions with consumers; as a result, there are several instances in which a FLE provides a benefit to a customer, and in return, a customer feels either grateful or indebted. This research demonstrates differences between customer gratitude and indebtedness, and highlights the differences between the conditions that elicit each emotion. Based on the consequences found this research, it is expected that organizations reap the most benefit by performing behaviors that generate customer gratitude. For that reason, this research offers a prescription for FLE behavior aimed to leverage customer felt gratitude or mitigate customer felt indebtedness. Again, these behaviors are anticipated to be applicable in various settings, including retailing, services and sales.

Additionally, this essay presents organizations of all kinds with an understanding of the significance of developing strategies aimed at generating customer felt gratitude or indebtedness. By identifying the potential advantages or disadvantages that firms could incur, this essay provides further justification for such strategies. Based on the results, firms could substantially benefit by developing strategies that intend to generate customer felt gratitude. More specifically, purchase intent, customer benevolence, preferential treatment, willingness-to-pay, commitment and trust were evident in grateful experiences. Moreover, these are just a few potential consequences of gratitude on customer relationships. It is expected that gratitude and indebtedness affect a variety of relational outcomes, which should be examined in future research.

Relationship Marketing

Marketers often want to develop strong relationships with consumers. This intention is highly justified given that organizations can accrue several benefits from having committed customer relationships. Research suggests that overtime the actions motivated from gratitude build and strengthen social bonds and friendships (Emmons and Shelton 2002). Thus, gratitude may be key driver in transforming customer-seller exchange relationships into committed relationships. Recent marketing research supports that gratitude is a key component to customer relationships and advocates that gratitude is necessary for relationships to advance (Raggio et al. 2012). Therefore, gratitude may be critical in positive relationship progression and it is encouraged that future research investigate this issue. Therefore, organizations may be able to reap valuable benefits, including strong customer relationships through eliciting customer felt gratitude. Research has yet to identify the influence of indebtedness on relationships, although the results of this research suggest that customer felt indebtedness may adversely affect relationships. Future work may also attempt to fulfill this gap in the literature.

Customer Helping Behavior

Additionally, this research also contributes to the consumer behavior literature by explaining why consumers may help others. Prior research indicates that affective commitment, organizational identification and relationship strength can influence customer helping behavior (Johnson and Rapp 2010). Particularly, the current research offers further insight to the literature

by indicating that customers may help exchange parties due to their gratitude. The data revealed a variety of helping behaviors, such as gift-giving, preferential treatment, purchase intent, willingness-to-pay and word-of-mouth. These findings are similar to various helping behaviors mentioned in Johnson and Rapp (2010); however the current research uniquely includes gift-giving and preferential treatment. It is recommended that research further investigates other customer helping behaviors.

This research also presents contributions by offering an explanation as to why consumers may donate to charitable causes and by revealing how organizations can develop reputable strategies that inspire individuals to give and to do good onto others. Research demonstrates that personal relevance promotes donation behavior (Ujcic et al. 2006), and perhaps expressions of gratitude will elicit similar behaviors. In their forthcoming research, Raggio and Folse (2011) found that gratitude indeed prompted pro-social behaviors including volunteerism and financial donations. However, they did not address the role of indebtedness. It is expected that donating and doing good onto others is a function of gratitude rather than indebtedness.

In addition, this work presents implications for event planning and sponsorships. This research suggests that organizations may want to consider gratitude campaigns, such as thanking sponsors to encourage long-term donations. Future work can also offer insight to the potential long-term effects of expressions of gratitude.

CONCLUSION

This research was performed to advance the understanding of gratitude and indebtedness and to uncover the theoretical and managerial implications of each emotion. The conceptual model constructed in this essay offers distinct conceptualizations, antecedents and consequences of each emotion. As a result of being the first marketing research to simultaneously examine gratitude and indebtedness and to position these emotions into a nomological model of relationship marketing, this essay makes several contributions. By providing comprehensive conceptualizations of both gratitude and indebtedness, this essay more clearly defines the constructs for those studying these two emotions. It demonstrates that these emotions are distinct, and it validates the proposition that equating gratitude and indebtedness is problematic. Moreover, the developed framework yields contributions to several areas concerning marketing exchanges and presents compelling implications. The framework developed in this essay will be used to guide the following two essays.

ESSAY TWO

DEVELOPING CUSTOMER FELT GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS SCALES

INTRODUCTION

Although gratitude and indebtedness have been noted as being commonly experienced emotions (Dorsch and Kelley 1994; Fredrickson 2009; Palmatier et al. 2009), very limited research has investigated these emotions in marketing exchanges. Gratitude and indebtedness have been associated with reciprocal behavior (Greenberg 1980; Emmons and McCullough 2004; Palmatier et al. 2009), a key component to relationship marketing activities, yet limited research has investigated what drives consumers to experience these emotions. Given that gratitude and indebtedness can be experienced by consumers in all types of exchanges and relationships, and that these emotions have been related to important outcomes for marketers (Morales 2005; Palmatier et al. 2009; Raggio and Folse 2009), the implications of research examining the causes of each emotion are expected to be widespread. Research that demonstrates systematic relationships among each emotion and corresponding causes could substantially advance the field investigating business-to-consumer relationships by outlining exchange behaviors that elicit each emotion, thus offering a prescription to managers. Therefore, the primary objective of this essay to advance the findings in Essay One by developing comprehensive measures of each emotion that are applicable to any field researching these emotions and to empirically examine the causes of customer felt gratitude and indebtedness.

Essay One revealed that gratitude and indebtedness are conceptually distinct, and that these emotions differ along four dimensions: affect, behavior, cognition and duration. This essay aims to develop measures of these dimensions for each emotion and then to use these measures to examine the causes of each emotion in marketing exchanges. Therefore, four studies were conducted, which adhered to the scale development procedures outlined by Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma (2003). First, items were generated based on extant literature and the findings in Essay One. These items were then reviewed by eight expert judges, which concluded Study 1. Study 2 further examined the items remaining or added after Study 1. Study 2 was used to: 1) explore the conceptualizations and dimensionality of each emotion, 2) refine the measures of each emotion, and 3) refine the manipulations of several antecedents. Using the refined measures, Study 3 was conducted with the goal of further refining the measures of gratitude and indebtedness and to assess the difference between gratitude and other emotions researched in marketing (i.e. happiness and pride). Lastly, Study 4 was conducted that included the measures retained from the previous studies to 1) finalize a comprehensive set of items measuring gratitude and indebtedness, to 2) assess the difference between the measurement of delight and gratitude and to 3) empirically identify how gratitude and indebtedness are generated in business-to-consumer relationships.

This essay proceeds as follows. First, a background section presents an overview of relationship marketing and the significance of gratitude and indebtedness in marketing research. The background section then describes the limitations of existing gratitude and indebtedness measures and then details the dimensionality of these two emotions. Next, the methodology section describes the scale development procedures followed and the four studies that were

conducted. The methodology section concludes by using the finalized scales to identify the causes of customer felt gratitude and indebtedness. Finally, this essay closes by presenting a discussion of the findings and a final conclusion.

BACKGROUND

It is commonly accepted that relationship marketing, defined as “the process of identifying, developing, maintaining, and terminating relationship exchanges with the purpose of enhancing performance” (Palmatier 2008b, p. 5), is both managerially and academically important (Bagozzi 1995; DeWulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci 2001; McKenna 1991). By taking a quick glance at the marketplace, one can easily notice that organizations are engaging in several activities with the objective of developing relationships with customers. For instance, practically every airline has a frequent flyer program in which customers build entitlements for upgrades, preferential rates, or services. Likewise, several coffee shops and restaurants entice customer loyalty by rewarding customers with free merchandise after a certain number of purchases. Businesses are also sending thank you cards and thank you emails to show customers that they appreciate their business. Predictably, these activities are justified since several benefits can be realized through establishing relationships with customers. Relationship marketing activities have been shown to influence sales growth, customer retention, customer share of wallet (i.e. sales penetration for a specific customer), price premiums (i.e. higher profit levels for sellers) and reduced selling costs (Palmatier 2008b).

Scholars suggest that relationship marketing activities can be classified into separate categories. Although various typologies of relationship marketing programs exist, most classifications include financial/economic, structural, and social components (Palmatier 2008b). Financial programs offer economic incentives to customers to entice repatronage (e.g. loyalty programs, discounts, giveaways, or free shipping) (Palmatier 2009b; Walz 2009). Nonetheless, the advantages of financial programs tend to be short-lived because competitors can easily match these programs) (Palmatier 2009b; Walz 2009). Structural programs are founded on relationship specific investments (RSIs) made by the selling firm that create and deliver value for the customer that cannot be attained elsewhere (Berry 1995) (e.g. customized packaging, electronic order-processing interface) (Palmatier 2009b; Walz 2009). Structural programs can provide strong competitive advantages, however such programs usually require large initial investments by the selling firm (Berry 1995; Palmatier 2009b; Walz 2009). Lastly, social programs use social events or regular, customized communication to personalize the customer relationship and express the buyer’s special status (e.g. personalized emails, suggestive selling based on past purchase activity) (Palmatier 2009b; Walz 2009). The relationships that are generated from social programs tend to be difficult to duplicate, therefore providing strong competitive advantage to the firm. Additionally, with an approximate return of 180%, social programs demonstrate the highest profit potential among all three relationship marketing programs investigated by Palmatier, Gopalakrishna, and Houston (2006).

Undoubtedly, a growing social program includes companies expressing gratitude toward their customers in nontraditional manners. For instance, Northwestern Mutual ran an advertising campaign stating “The World’s Most Admired Company is also the World’s Most Thankful.” Likewise, Frito Lay recently thanked customers through social media (Quinton 2011); and

Citibank now offers thank you points to customers. In addition, numerous companies email their customers thanking them for their business. Taking into account these acts, the pervasiveness of relationship marketing, in addition to the positive outcomes associated with gratitude (Raggio and Folse 2009; Palmatier et al. 2009), a question emerges as to how gratitude arises in customer relationships? This research addresses that question as well as the following questions: How is gratitude different from indebtedness? How are gratitude and indebtedness measured? How does indebtedness arise in customer relationships? In order to answer these questions, research first needed to be conducted to develop psychometrical sound gratitude and indebtedness scales. The remaining part of the background section will first highlight the measurement issues surrounding gratitude and indebtedness and then discuss the conceptualizations and potential dimensions of each concept.

Limitations of the Existing Gratitude and Indebtedness Scales

As detailed in Essay One, several measurement issues are associated with gratitude and indebtedness (Goei and Boster 2005). Due to using these emotions interchangeably, scholars often simultaneously measure gratitude and indebtedness and then combine the measures into one construct (Goei and Boster 2005). In addition, research lacks consensus in measuring these emotions. For example, different measures of indebtedness can be noted in Dorsch and Kelly (1994), Goei and Boster (2005), and Tsang (2006). Moreover, gratitude is typically measured by the three following items: grateful, thankful, and appreciative (Algoe, Gable, and Maisel 2010; Emmons and McCullough 2003; Morales 2005; Palmatier et al. 2009), yet based on the findings in Essay One, these measures fail to capture the full domain of gratitude that included four underlying dimensions of affect, behavior, cognition and duration. Altogether, several measurement issues are present in the existing literature regarding gratitude and indebtedness and this essay attempts to shed light on these issues.

Dimensions of Gratitude and Indebtedness

Table 13: Four Dimensions Distinguishing Gratitude and Indebtedness

	Gratitude	Indebtedness
Affect	The emotion is pleasant.	The emotion is uncomfortable and aversive to experience.
Behavior	There is intent to benefit the other party's welfare.	There is intent to benefit one's own welfare.
Cognition	The individual makes positive attributions about the other party.	The individual thinks about him/herself and resolving the inequity between themselves and the other party.
Duration	The emotion is long-lived.	The emotion is short-lived.
Composite Definition	A positive, enduring emotion that is accompanied by positive attributions about the other party and the intent to benefit the other party.	A mixed or negative, un-enduring emotion that is accompanied by thoughts about the self and the inequity within the relationship between themselves and the other party, and the intent to benefit one's own welfare.

The results from Essay One indicated that gratitude and indebtedness are conceptually distinct and that these emotions differ along the four dimensions: affect, behavior, cognition and duration. After receiving a benefit from another party, consumers have an emotional response, which refers to the affect dimension; intend to partake in some sort of action, which refers to the

behavior dimension; have thoughts about resolving the inequity or thoughts about the other party, which refers to the cognition dimension; and the emotion remains either temporarily or enduringly. Definitions for each dimension of gratitude and indebtedness are provided in Table 13.

METHODOLOGY

To address the research questions, the scale development procedures recommended by Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma (2003) were followed and four studies were conducted. First, items were generated based on the extant gratitude and indebtedness literature (Palmatier et al. 2009; Tsang 2006; Watkins et al. 2006) and the findings in Essay One. Items were generated to represent one of the four dimensions (i.e. affect, behavior, cognition, or duration). Sixty-two items were generated for indebtedness and sixty-three items were generated for gratitude. Next, a series of four studies followed. Particularly, Study 1 utilized expert judges to review items generated by several scholars. Next, Study 2 included exploratory analyses of the items that remained after Study 1. This was followed by Study 3, which included confirmatory analyses to further refine the items, confirm the dimensionality, and examine the reliability and validity of the scales. Lastly, Study 4 utilized confirmatory analyses to finalize the scales and to assess the hypothesized model relationships.

Study 1: Expert Judge Review

The objective of Study 1 was to examine the content and face validity of items generated for the gratitude and indebtedness concepts. Eight expert judges reviewed the items. Four judges reviewed gratitude items, while a different four reviewed indebtedness items. Four expert judges held Ph.D.'s in business disciplines while the remaining four judges were doctoral students of psychology, marketing and management. Judges assessed all items and indicated the degree to which each item represented its corresponding dimension. Judges categorized each item as 1 = not representative, 2 = somewhat representative or 3 = very representative (Walsh and Beatty 2007). Judges were also asked to generate new items and assess item wording, content, clarity, ease of use, proper reading level, and wording effects (See Appendix F). An inter-rater reliability coefficient, a variation of Cohen's kappa (Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian 1996), was calculated for each group of reviewers. This indicated adequate inter-rater reliability, 87.29 for gratitude and 92.46 for indebtedness. The results also suggested that eleven items should be removed for indebtedness and that ten items should be removed for gratitude. Items were removed if more than one judge rated the item as not representative. Therefore, fifty-one items remained for the indebtedness measure, while fifty-three items remained for the gratitude measure (See Appendix G for all remaining items).

Study 2: Exploratory Analysis—Item Reduction and Dimensionality of the Scales

The objectives of Study 2 were to examine the psychometric properties and dimensionality of the items generated or retained from Study 1, and to further refine the measures. To fulfill this objective, a study was conducted using one hundred sixteen undergraduate student subjects.

Procedures

Two different scenarios were created that manipulated antecedents of each emotion (See Appendix H). The manipulated antecedents were based on the results of Essay One and extant literature. This included manipulating benevolent intentions, comfort, customization and extra-role behavior that were expected to generate gratitude; and manipulating mutual intentions, vulnerability, customer norm violation and excessive extra-role behavior that were expected to generate indebtedness. Participants were first presented with a consent form, which was followed by the scenario that was presumed to elicit gratitude or indebtedness. After reading these scenarios, participants were randomly presented items that reflected gratitude and indebtedness; however the dimensions were measured in the following order: affect, duration, behavior and cognition. Participants then completed measures of antecedents; including customization (items were adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997, Lusch and Brown 1996, and Pounders 2010), extra-role behavior (items were adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003), excessive extra-role behavior (items were adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003), benevolent intentions (items were adapted from Lee et al. 2004), mutual intentions (items were adapted from Lee et al. 2004), and consumer norm violations. Measures of comfort and vulnerability were also included to assess the underlying assumptions of the threat to self-esteem model (See Appendices G and K for exact measures). All measures used seven point scales unless otherwise noted.

Results

The first analysis aimed to determine the psychometric properties and dimensionality of the items. To assess these properties, a series of exploratory factor analyses were conducted using principal components and varimax rotation. Principal components is suggested when the goal is item or data reduction for scale development (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003). The factor analyses included analyses that restricted and unrestricted the number of factors. Several criteria were followed to determine the number of factors to be extracted. This included that each factor has an eigenvalue greater than one, also known as the Kaiser-Guttman criterion or Latent Root criterion, scree plot examination (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003), and the number of items loading on each factor. Particularly, it is recommended that loadings are at least .4 or higher (Floyd and Widaman 1995; Hair et al. 1998) and that at least three items load highly on a factor (Comrey 1988). It is also recommended that the average variance explained by the factor solution is greater than 50% and that each factor accounts for at least 5% of the variance (Hair et al. 1998). Following these guidelines, the eight factor solution was deemed most appropriate for the gratitude and indebtedness items (See Appendix I). The eight factors were labeled gratitude affect, gratitude behavior, gratitude cognitions, gratitude duration, indebtedness affect, indebtedness behavior, indebtedness cognitions and indebtedness duration. There was a clear distinction among six of the factors, however the indebtedness cognitions and behavior items slightly cross-loaded (See Appendix I). Although, when examining these items in a separate analysis, the results indicated clearer distinctions between these two dimensions (See Appendix J).

Another factor analysis aimed to reduce the number of items for each scale. Items were eliminated based on item loadings, cross loadings, and internal consistency analyses. Several guidelines were adhered to. Particularly, Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma (2003) suggest that

each new scale maintains item loadings of at least .4 but no greater than .9, Robinson, Shaver, and Wrightsman (1991) recommend average inter-item correlations of .3 or higher, and Bearden and Netemeyer (1998) encourage corrected item-to-total correlations of .5 or higher and Cronbach's alpha levels (i.e. reliability estimates) of .8 or higher. As noted in Table 14, Appendix I and Appendix J, the results generally adhered to these recommendations. Therefore, when removing items, the researcher sought to retain the most representative items that tapped an additional domain of each construct and to remove items that could be considered redundant. Following these objectives, the initial fifty-one item measure of indebtedness was reduced to a twenty-four item measure and the initial fifty-three item measure of gratitude was also reduced to a twenty-three item measure (See Appendix G).

Table 14: Reliabilities and Average Inter-Item Correlations

Dimension	GA¹⁹	GB	GC	GD	IA	IB	IC	ID
Reliability	.90	.90	.94	.94	.89	.77	.87	.94
Average Inter-Item Correlation	.54	.61	.72	.71	.50	.36	.53	.71

Table 15: Antecedent Manipulation Checks

Antecedent Measure	Gratitude Scenario	Indebtedness Scenario
Mutual intentions	5.56	5.50
Vulnerability	2.66	2.90
Excessive Extra-Role Behavior	3.15	3.54
Customer Norm Violation	3.08	3.57
Benevolent Intentions	5.12	4.75
Comfort	5.47	5.00
Customization	6.12	5.90
Extra-Role Behavior	5.56	4.90

Next, the scenarios and remaining forty-seven items were further examined to ensure interpretation and validity of the findings. Additional analyses were conducted to demonstrate that the scenarios differed, such that each scenario reflected different levels of the manipulated antecedents and that each scenario yielded higher levels of either gratitude or indebtedness. First, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to verify that the scenarios statistically differed in regard to the manipulated antecedents. Indeed, the results supported a significant main effect of the scenarios [Wilks' $\lambda = .81$; $F(8, 105) = 3.07$; $p < .01$; $\eta_p^2 = .19$], thus suggesting that the scenarios significantly differed. Next, the univariate results were examined to determine which antecedents differed between the gratitude or indebtedness scenarios. The results indicated significant differences ($p < .05$) in excessive extra-role behavior, customer norm violation, benevolent intentions and comfort, but non-significant differences for mutual intentions, customization and vulnerability. The significant and non-significant differences were all in the expected direction except for mutual intentions. Specifically, the scenario designed to manipulate antecedents of gratitude corresponded to higher mean scores of benevolent intentions, comfort, and relevant extra-role behavior, while the scenario designed to

¹⁹ GA = Gratitude Affect; GB = Gratitude Behavior; GC = Gratitude Cognition; GD = Gratitude Duration; IA = Indebtedness Affect; IB = Indebtedness Behavior; IC = Indebtedness Cognition; ID = Indebtedness Duration

manipulate antecedents of indebtedness corresponded to higher mean scores of excessive extra-role behavior and customer norm violation (See Table 15).

Further analyses were also conducted to determine whether the scenarios related to the corresponding emotion and its dimensions (i.e. affect, behavior, cognition and duration). More specifically, the following analyses were performed to demonstrate that each scenario yielded higher levels of either gratitude or indebtedness. Based on the factor analyses described above, summated scales were created by summing and averaging the remaining items for each gratitude and indebtedness dimension. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between the scenarios and the dimensions of gratitude and indebtedness. Indeed, the results indicated a significant main effect [Wilks' $\lambda = .85$; $F(8, 107) = 2.46$; $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .16$]; thus, demonstrating that the scenarios significantly differed in respect to the eight dimensions. Therefore the univariate results were further examined to understand the existence of this difference. The univariate results indicated that significant differences existed between scenarios for all of the dimensions except for indebtedness and gratitude behavior (See Table 16). All mean differences were in the expected direction except for indebtedness cognitions, in which those exposed to the gratitude scenario scored higher on the indebtedness cognitions scale than those exposed to the indebtedness scenario.

Table 16: Emotion Manipulation Checks

Dimension	Gratitude Scenario	Indebtedness Scenario
Gratitude Affect	5.50	5.00
Gratitude Behavior	5.46	5.38
Gratitude Cognitions	5.89	5.40
Gratitude Duration	4.43	3.81
Indebtedness Affect	2.62	3.41
Indebtedness Behavior	3.84	3.88
Indebtedness Cognitions	5.90	5.39
Indebtedness Duration	3.55	4.10

Based on these results, changes were made to the indebtedness cognition items. Particularly, the items used in the current study centered on the inequity of the situation rather than resolving in the inequity in the situation. Since gratitude and indebtedness can both occur in inequitable situations, it is understandable that similar scores on the current indebtedness cognition scale may exist. Therefore, since individuals experiencing indebtedness attempt to resolve inequity, changes were made to the indebtedness cognition items to reflect this component (See Appendix G). After making these changes, the items were ready to be studied in Study 3.

Study 3: Confirmatory Analyses to Assess Psychometric Properties

Study 3 was conducted to address the following issues: (Issue 1) to assess the measurement properties of all constructs presented in the gratitude model (See Figure 2) and to distinguish the developed gratitude measure from pride and happiness; (Issue 2) further examine the dimensionality and psychometric properties of the gratitude items retained from Study 2; (Issue 3) to compare the developed and prior measure of gratitude; (Issue 4) examine whether

customization, extra-role behavior and benevolent intentions can be classified as supportive according to the threat to self-esteem model; (Issue 5) identify the antecedents of gratitude; (Issue 6) assess the measurement properties of all constructs presented in the indebtedness model (See Figure 3); (Issue 7) further examine the dimensionality and psychometric properties of the indebtedness items retained from Study 2; (Issue 8) examine whether mutual intentions, excessive extra-role behavior and consumer norm violation can be classified as threatening according to the threat to self-esteem model; and to (Issue 9) identify the antecedents of indebtedness.

Hypotheses: Antecedents of Gratitude and Indebtedness

The conceptual models presented in Figures 2 and 3 are built upon the threat to self-esteem model of recipient reactions to help (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983) and propose that gratitude and indebtedness have different antecedents. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the antecedents, which are frontline employee (i.e. service provider) behaviors or intentions that are expected to elicit customer felt gratitude or indebtedness.

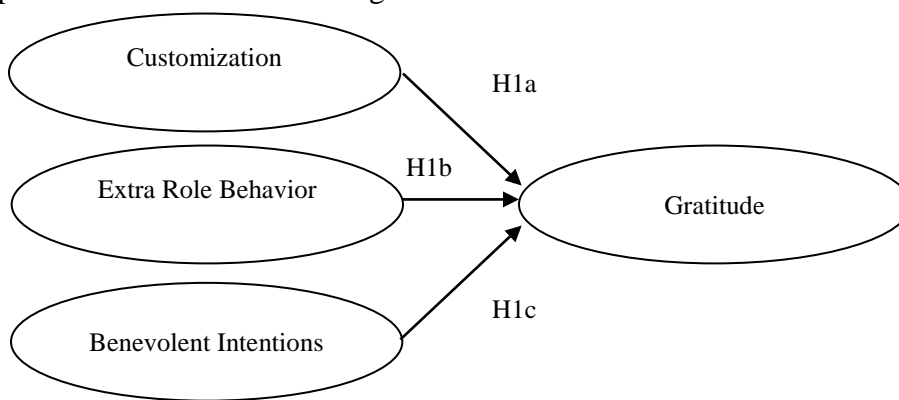


Figure 2: Antecedents of Gratitude

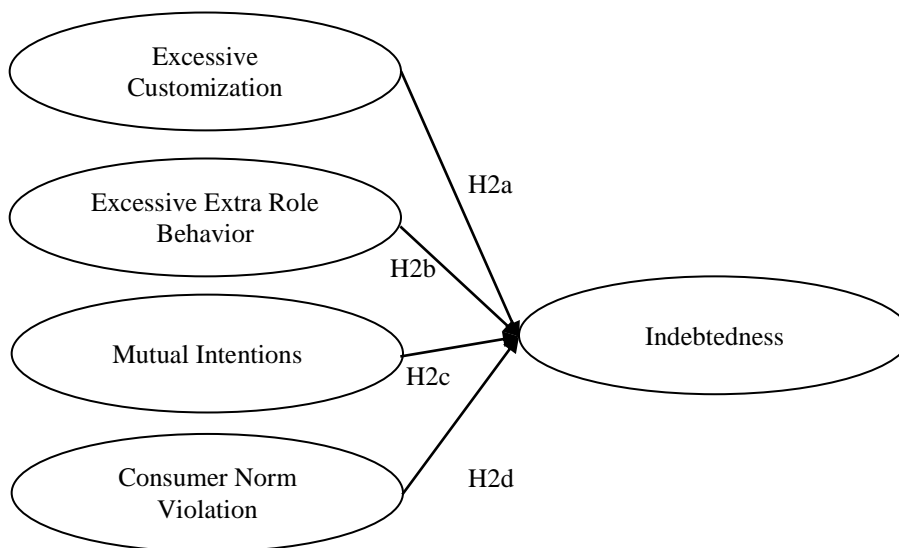


Figure 3: Antecedents of Indebtedness

The current research investigates customers' emotional reactions to receiving help from a frontline employee (i.e. service provider) and bases the research hypotheses on the threat to self-esteem model. The threat to self-esteem model posits that receiving help is not always a positive experience; instead, recipients of help can have both negative and positive reactions to receiving help (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983; Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010). Particularly, the effect on the recipient's self-concept as a result of receiving help is a key determinant of the recipient's reactions (Fisher 1983). According to the threat to self-esteem model, helping encounters contain a mixture of positive, self-supportive, as well as negative, self-threatening elements. Self-supportive help occurs when the recipient (i.e. customer) feels appreciated and cared for or the help provides instrumental value. In contrast, self-threatening help occurs when the recipient (i.e. customer) feels inferior or overly dependent upon the helper (i.e. service provider), evidence of failure is present, or if help opposes with values of self-reliance or independence (Fisher 1983; Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983; Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010). Situational conditions, which can consist of help, donor, recipient and context characteristics associated with the help ascertain the magnitude of self-threat or self-support in help encounters (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983). Critical to the theory is that the magnitude of self-support versus self-threat determines recipient's reactions to receiving help. When a helping encounter is considered as having a larger magnitude of self-support than self-threat, non-defensive recipient reactions (e.g. positive affect, positive appraisals of benefactor and help, low amount of succeeding self-help) are expected, whereas when a helping encounter is considered as having a larger magnitude of self-threat than self-support, defensive recipient reactions (e.g. negative affect, negative appraisals of benefactor and help, high amount of succeeding self-help) are expected (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983). Altogether, self-supportive and self-threatening help encounters generate different recipient affective states and evaluations (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983), and this research investigates how self-supportive versus self-threatening helping encounters may generate customer felt gratitude or indebtedness.

Gratitude

Figure 2 proposes that frontline employee behaviors and intentions, such as customization, extra-role behavior, and benevolent intentions elicit customer felt gratitude. These antecedents are expected to yield positive recipient reactions due being considered supportive elements in a helping encounter. As noted above, a helping encounter is considered supportive when the customer feels appreciated and cared for, or the help provides instrumental value to the recipient (Fisher 1983; Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010). Providing specialized service or accommodations to meet a customer's needs, going above and beyond job requirements to help a customer, or having the customers' best interests in mind can offer an indication to a customer that he/she is cared for and valued by the service provider, and can provide a customer with instrumental value. Thus, these actions are expected to be considered supportive elements in a helping encounter, and therefore elicit a positive customer emotion, gratitude. Specifically, the following hypothesis is presented:

H₁: Customer felt gratitude is positively affected by a) customization, b) extra-role behavior and c) benevolent intentions.

Indebtedness

Figure 3 proposes that a frontline employee's behavior, including excessive customization, excessive extra-role behavior, a frontline employee's mutual intentions or a customer's violation of an exchange norm elicits customer felt indebtedness. These constructs are expected to elicit negative recipient reactions due to be considered self-threatening elements in a helping situation. Helping situations are considered threatening to the self when the recipient of help (i.e. customer) feels inferior or overly dependent on the provider of help (i.e. frontline employee), if evidence of failure is present or if help opposes with values of self-reliance or independence (Fisher 1983; Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983; Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010). Therefore, it is expected that when the frontline employee performs excessive behaviors to help a customer, which can include customizing a service too much, being too flexible or too accommodating, or going too far outside of job requirements, a customer may feel inferior or overly dependent on the frontline employee; thus provoking a feeling of indebtedness. Likewise, when the frontline employee is attributed as having mutual intentions, it is expected that the customer perceives the need to repay or make up for the employee's actions, thus, conflicting with the value of independence by restricting the recipient's behavior. Thus, the customer is expected to again feel inferior to the frontline employee. Lastly, when a customer feels that he/she did something wrong, such as violating an exchange expectation, it is expected that the customer feels inferior to the frontline employee and perceives the need to compensate; therefore, customer indebtedness is also expected to be elicited in this situation. Altogether, as a result of making the customer feel inferior or overly dependent upon the service provider, or violating values of self-reliance or dependence, excessive customization, excessive extra-role behavior, mutual intentions and customer norm violations are expected to be considered self-threatening elements in a helping encounter. Therefore these constructs are expected to elicit a mixed or negative customer emotion, indebtedness. Specifically, the following hypothesis is presented:

H₂: Customer felt indebtedness is positively affected by a) excessive customization, b) excessive extra-role behavior, c) mutual intentions, and d) customer norm violations.

Sample, Procedures and Measures

Two-hundred and thirty undergraduate students enrolled in a departmental subject pool participated in the research for course credit. Study 3 followed procedures similar to those in Study 2, with the only difference existed in the order and type of measures. Therefore, participants were exposed to the same scenario as in Study 2, which was designed to manipulate either antecedents of gratitude or indebtedness. Then participants responded to several types of measures, including: emotions, antecedents, threats to self-esteem checks, outcomes (Essay 3) and discriminant validity checks. Emotion measures included the gratitude and indebtedness items. Measures within each dimension of gratitude and indebtedness were presented randomly, but presented in the order of affect, duration, behavior and cognition. Antecedent measures included customization (items were adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997, Lusch and Brown 1996, and Pounders 2010), extra-role behavior (items were adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003), excessive extra-role behavior (items were adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003), benevolent intentions (items were adapted from Lee et al. 2004), mutual

intentions (items were adapted from Lee et al. 2004), and consumer norm violations. Threat to self-esteem measures, which were included to examine the underlying assumptions of model, consisted of comfort and vulnerability items. Outcome measures (Essay 3) included positive word-of-mouth (items were adapted from Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003), satisfaction (items were adapted from Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos 2005), purchase intentions (items were adapted from Hess, Shankar, and Klein 2003) and preferential treatment (items were adapted from Harris and Goode 2004 and Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996). Lastly, measures of pride (items were adapted from Aaker and Williams 1998) and happiness (items were adapted from Richins 1997) were included to examine discriminant validity of the developed gratitude scale (See Table 17 for exact measures).

Results

The data was analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis. All of the measurement models in this study will be assessed through a set of criteria relating to model validity as well as convergent, construct and nomological validity of individual constructs. When assessing model validity, researchers generally consider at least three measures of overall model fit – absolute model fit measured by the χ^2 value, degrees of freedom and associated significance levels, a relative fit measure (CFI) and the RMSEA measure which is a scaled absolute fit measure. While the χ^2 value is the only truly “statistical” measure for which a significance level can be determined, its value as a measure of model fit is compromised by a number of study characteristics (i.e., model complexity and sample size) such that its value as a statistical assessment of model fit is limited (Hair et al. 1998). As a result, a number of alternative measures have been suggested. It is recommended that the CFI measure have values greater than .90 (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003) or even greater than .95 (Hu and Bentler 1999), while RMSEA values should be below .08 (Browne and Cudeck 1993) or .06 (Hu and Bentler 1999). Therefore, model validity was assessed according to these recommendations, and the subsequent results will report a χ^2 value, degrees of freedom, associated significance levels, CFI and RMSEA measures for each model.

Convergent, construct and nomological validity of individual constructs were tested according to the following criteria. When assessing convergent validity, indicator loadings on their hypothesized constructs should be statistically significant and greater than .70 (Hair et al. 1998). Construct validity was assessed primarily through composite reliability and average variance extracted measures for each construct, which should be above the recommended criteria of .70 and .50, respectively (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hair et al. 1998; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, nomological validity was assessed by examining the statistical significance of relationships among hypothesized constructs and the discriminant validity among all constructs. Hypothesized relationships should exhibit significant correlations, although the final assessment of relationships will occur in structural model testing. To assess discriminant validity, the average variance extracted was compared to squared correlations among constructs, with discriminant validity support if the squared correlation was greater than the average variance extracted values (Fornell and Larcker 1981). If a threat to discriminant validity was found through this test, an additional assessment was made by constraining the correlation between these two constructs to one, re-estimating the model and employing a χ^2 difference test. If the constrained relationship resulted in a significantly worse fitting model (i.e., the $\Delta\chi^2$ was

statistically significant), then discriminant validity is supported (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). These two tests of discriminant validity were used in conjunction as needed for each of the following models.

After establishing sound measurement properties, structural models were estimated to examine the classification of constructs according to the threat to self-esteem model and to test the research hypotheses. Validity of the structural models was assessed by examining the standardized coefficients and their significance (Hair et al. 1998). Pairwise comparisons of coefficients were also performed to further examine the classification of constructs as supportive or threatening according to the threat to self-esteem model.

The following section will first detail the analyses and results of the gratitude scale and then detail the analyses and results for the indebtedness scale. Each of the subsequent analyses was conducted to address the aforementioned Issues 1- 9.

Gratitude Results

The following analyses were conducted to address Issues 1-5.

Issue 1: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the Gratitude Model and Distinguishing Gratitude from Pride and Happiness

Table 17: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Gratitude Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loadings
Factor: Benevolent Intentions²⁰	AVE = .66; CR = .85
The mechanic “was concerned with my welfare”	.80
The mechanic’s “concern is truly genuine”	.79
The mechanic was looking out for my best interests (added)	.84
Factor: Comfort	AVE = .68; CR = .91
Comforted me	.82
Put me at ease	.84
Made me feel relaxed	.80
Took my worries away	.84
Calmed my fears	.84
Factor: Vulnerability	AVE = .66; CR = .93
Exposed	.88
Insecure	.89
Vulnerable	.78
Uncertain	.76
Uneasy	.82
Unprotected	.86
Like my public life was made private	.71
Factor: Customization²¹	AVE = .75; CR = .94

²⁰ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004.

²¹ Items adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997; Lusch and Brown 1996; Pounders 2010

Table 17 continued

The mechanic “was flexible in response to my requests”	.83
The mechanic “modified his service based on my needs”	.83
The mechanic “was willing to accommodate an unexpected situation”	.90
The mechanic “was flexible in dealing with me”	.92
The mechanic “made adjustments to cope with changing circumstances”	.85
Factor: Extra-Role Behavior²²	AVE = .52; CR = .81
The mechanic appropriately “went above and beyond the call of duty”	.68
The mechanic performed extra behaviors that were suitable to his role	.75
The mechanic “I dealt with” engaged in extra behaviors that were fitting to his job	.78
The mechanic “went out of his way” just the right amount	.68
Factor: Pride²³	AVE = .65; CR = .88
“I feel proud”	.86
“I feel pride”	.90
“I feel like I did something right”	.68
“I feel self-confident”	.79
Factor: Happiness²⁴	AVE = .77; CR = .91
“Happy”	.78
“Pleased”	.93
“Joyful”	.92
Factor: Gratitude Affect	AVE = .61; CR = .88
I am valued	.80
I am supported	.81
I feel special	.76
I feel treasured	.73
I feel respected	.79
Factor: Gratitude Behavior	AVE = .71; CR = .94
I want to do something to improve the other person’s well-being.	.81
I want to help the other person out.	.85
I want to do something for the other person’s benefit.	.88
I want to do something to benefit the other person.	.82
I want to return the favor.	.80
I want to do something for the other party’s sake.	.89
Factor: Gratitude Cognition	AVE = .68; CR = .93
I think the other person is a good person	.82
The other person is genuine	.84
The other person is caring	.80
I think the other person is honest	.80
I think the other person is respectful	.87
I think the other person is thoughtful	.82

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to analyze the measurement properties of all items included in the gratitude model. This included antecedents (i.e. extra-role behavior, customization and benevolent intentions), the developed gratitude measure, vulnerability, comfort, pride and happiness. The measurement properties revealed in this analysis set the foundation for addressing Issues 2-5. Fit statistics for the measurement model satisfied recommended criteria ($\chi^2 = 1742.75$ (1049), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .92, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). All indicators significantly ($p < .001$)

²² Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003

²³ Items adapted from Aaker and Williams 1998

²⁴ Items adapted from Richins 1997

loaded to their corresponding construct. Three items fell slightly below .70, which included two measures of extra-role behavior and one measure of pride (See Table 17). Otherwise, all item loadings were greater than .70. In addition, composite reliabilities and average variance extracted for each construct were above the recommended criteria of .70 and .50, respectively (See Table 17). These results offer support of convergent and construct validity. In support of nomological validity, all constructs were positively and significantly ($p < .05$) correlated, although negative correlations were noted with vulnerability (See Appendix M). The only non-significant ($p < .05$) correlation was between vulnerability and pride. Moreover, the results indicated that pride and happiness were positively and significantly ($p < .001$) related to the dimensions of gratitude; however not to the extent that discriminant validity was threatened. As noted in Appendix L, the only threat to discriminant validity was between gratitude and benevolent intentions. A χ^2 difference test was conducted, which indicated that constraining this path to one resulted in significantly ($p < .01$) worse fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 10.4$), therefore providing evidence of discriminant validity between gratitude and benevolent intentions.

Issue 2: Examining the Dimensionality and Psychometric Properties of the Gratitude Items

Table 18: Correlations of First-order Gratitude Dimensions

			Correlation Estimate
Affect	<-->	Duration	.256
Affect	<-->	Behavior	.467
Affect	<-->	Cognition	.579
Duration	<-->	Behavior	.266
Duration	<-->	Cognition	.060
Behavior	<-->	Cognition	.499

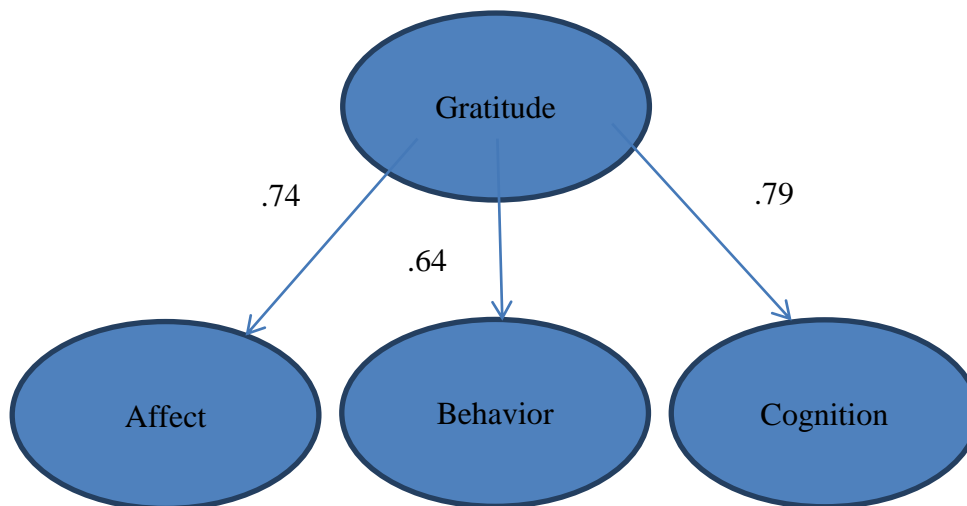


Figure 4: Second-order Model of Gratitude

While addressing Issue 1, Issue 2 was simultaneously addressed. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the twenty-three item measure of gratitude to determine the dimensionality of the scale and to examine whether the measure qualified as a second-order

model with four first-order factors (i.e. affect, behavior, cognition and duration). The results indicated that most of the dimensions were significantly correlated ($p < .05$); although the duration dimension failed to highly correlate with the other dimensions (See Table 18). Furthermore, the high correlations among the affect, behavior and cognition dimensions suggested that a second-order model of gratitude was appropriate. The second-order model of gratitude indicated adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 223.66$ (116), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06) (See Figure 4). The conceptual argument supporting the second-order model of gratitude stems from the qualitative findings in Essay One. This will be expanded upon in Study 4 on pages 73-74.

Issue 3: Comparing the Developed and Prior Measure of Gratitude

Another analysis was performed to understand how the newly developed measure of gratitude related to measures used in prior research. Previous research has often measured gratitude using the synonyms grateful, thankful and appreciative. To examine the relationship between the developed measure of gratitude and measures used in previous research, composite indicators for each of the three dimensions (i.e. affect, behavior and cognition) were created and used as indicators of the new measure, while the measures grateful, thankful and appreciative were used as indicators that represented how gratitude has been measured in previous research. Using confirmatory factor analysis, the results indicated adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 409.45$ (166), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .93, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .08). Note that the measurement properties of the developed gratitude measure were discussed in Issue 1 and can be found in Table 17. The reliability of the prior measure equaled .86, and the items loaded as follows: thankful (standardized loading = .88), grateful (standardized loading = .91), and appreciative (standardized loading = .62). Moreover, the results indicated that the developed three dimensional measure of gratitude highly related to past measurement of gratitude (.85), such that evidence of discriminant validity was not achieved. Particularly, the square of the correlation (.72) between the developed and prior (i.e. grateful, thankful and appreciative) measure of gratitude was higher than the average variance extracted from each construct (average variance extracted for the prior measure = .67; average variance extracted for each first-order factor includes the following: affect = .60; behavior = .71; and cognition = .68). A χ^2 difference test was conducted, which indicated that constraining this path to one resulted in significantly worse fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 5.85$), therefore providing evidence of discriminant validity between the developed and prior measure of gratitude. Thus, although the developed and prior measure of gratitude are highly correlated, the results suggest that they are not perfectly identical. Ultimately, given the high correlation of .85, these results provide evidence to support the content validity of the developed measure, such that when an individual is grateful, he or she feels positively, thinks positively about the other party and intends to benefit the other party.

Issue 4: Classifying Antecedents as Supportive According to the Threat to Self-Esteem Model

The subsequent analysis examined the relationships among extra-role behavior, customization, benevolent intentions, vulnerability and comfort to determine whether these antecedents could be classified as supportive according to the threat to self-esteem model. Since Issue 1 demonstrated adequate measurement properties of the constructs, a structural model was created; the three antecedents were positioned as exogenous constructs while vulnerability and

comfort were positioned as endogenous constructs. The results indicated acceptable model fit, ($\chi^2 = 447.07$ (243), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). Critical to the analysis was the assessment of the paths from each antecedent to comfort and vulnerability. The results supported that benevolent intentions, customization and extra-role behavior could be classified as supportive, since each antecedent was significantly ($p < .05$) and positively associated with comfort, but negatively associated with vulnerability. Results from pairwise comparisons suggested that the path estimates to comfort were significantly different from path estimates to vulnerability. See Table 19 for more details.

Table 19: Standardized Path Estimates Among Gratitude Antecedents and Comfort and Vulnerability

Antecedent	Comfort	Vulnerability	Critical Ratio of Pairwise Comparisons Parameter Estimates
Benevolent Intentions	.350	-.246	3.771
Extra-role Behavior	.230	-.191	3.997
Customization	.230	-.252	3.013

Since results of Issue 1 demonstrated a threat to discriminant validity between gratitude and benevolent intentions, the above model was re-estimated after removing benevolent intentions from the model. The results indicated adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 349.54$ (184), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). In addition, extra-role behavior still had a significant and positive effect on comfort (standardized estimate = .325), and a significant and negative effect on vulnerability (standardized path estimate = -.323). Furthermore, customization still had a significant and positive effect on comfort (standardized path estimate = .440, $p < .01$), and a significant and negative effect on vulnerability (standardized path estimate = -.339, $p < .01$). These results indicate that the model still holds after removing benevolent intentions.

Issue 5: Identifying the Antecedents of Gratitude

A structural model was estimated to test H1a-c by examining the effects of benevolent intentions, extra-role behavior, and customization on gratitude. The model indicated acceptable fit, ($\chi^2 = 662.95$ (368), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06) (See Table 17 for measurement properties). Examining the path estimates revealed that gratitude was positively affected by benevolent intentions (standardized path estimate = .66, $p < .001$) and customization (standardized path estimate = .24, $p < .01$). However, extra-role behavior had no effect on gratitude (standardized path estimate = .105, $p > .05$). These results offer initial evidence for H1a and H1c.

Since the results of Issue 1 revealed a threat to discriminant validity between gratitude and benevolent intentions, benevolent intentions was removed from the above model and the model was re-estimated. The results revealed acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 529.35$ (293), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). As with the previous model, customization still positively impacted gratitude (standardized path estimate = .634, $p < .01$). However, this time extra-role behavior did have a positive and significant effect on gratitude (standardized path estimate = .277, $p < .01$). Thus, these results

slightly differ from the previous findings by indicating support for both H1a and H1b. Altogether, these results support for the main study to be conducted.

Indebtedness Results

Similar analyses were performed to examine the items of indebtedness. Since confirmatory factor analysis was utilized, the following models were assessed according to the criteria described on pages fifty-nine through sixty. The subsequent analyses were conducted to address Issues 6-9.

Issue 6: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the Indebtedness Model

Table 20: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Indebtedness Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loadings
Factor: Mutual Intentions²⁵	AVE = .65; CR = .85
The mechanic “helped because it was mutually beneficial for him and me”	.80
The mechanic “offered support because he thought it would be beneficial for both parties”	.80
The mechanic “helped because he gained as well as me”	.83
Factor: Customer Norm Violation	AVE = .68; CR = .86
I feel like I didn’t fulfill my role	.77
I feel as if I might have done something wrong	.86
I feel as though I violated an expectation	.85
Factor: Excessive Extra Role Behavior²⁶	AVE = .58; CR = .80
The mechanic inappropriately “went above and beyond the call of duty”	.85
The mechanic “I dealt with” engaged in behaviors that were inappropriate to his job	.71
The mechanic “went out of his way” too much	.71
Factor: Comfort	AVE = .68; CR = .91
Comforted me	.82
Put me at ease	.84
Made me feel relaxed	.79
Took my worries away	.84
Calmed my fears	.84
Factor: Vulnerability	AVE = .67; CR = .93
Exposed	.88
Insecure	.89
Vulnerable	.78
Uncertain	.76
Uneasy	.82
Unprotected	.86
Like my public life was made private	.71
Factor: Indebtedness Affect	AVE = .57; CR = .89
Constrained	.84

²⁵ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004

²⁶ Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003

Table 20 continued

I feel like something is hanging over my head	.71
Tense	.64
Bothered	.72
Trapped	.83
I feel like my hands are tied	.77
Factor: Indebtedness Behavior	AVE = .53; CR = .82
My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit me.	.62
My goal is to improve my well-being.	.67
I want my actions to benefit me.	.81
I want to do something for my sake.	.80
Factor: Indebtedness Cognition	AVE = .60; CR = .88
I am thinking about resolving the position I am in.	.74
I am thinking about handling my relationship with the other party.	.86
I am thinking about settling my relationship with the other party.	.61
I am thinking about clearing up my relationship with the other party	.82
I owe the other person	.82
Factor: Indebtedness Duration	AVE = .68; CR = .93
Doing something for the other person would immediately rid this feeling.	.85
After I return the favor, I will no longer feel this way.	.80
I'll feel differently the sooner I do something for the other person.	.83
Once I do something to repay the other party, I won't feel this way anymore.	.85
This feeling will go away after I reciprocate.	.73
This emotion will disappear after I do something for the other person.	.87

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to examine the measurement properties of all items to set the foundation for subsequent analyses. The model included measures of the four dimensions of indebtedness (affect, behavior, cognition and duration), comfort, vulnerability, and the antecedents (e.g. mutual intentions, non-relevant extra-role behavior and consumer norm-violation). The results indicated adequate fit criteria ($\chi^2 = 1148.52$ (783), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). In addition, all indicators significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to their corresponding construct. Most loadings were greater than .70 (See Table 20). Composite reliability estimates and the average variance extracted for each construct were above the recommended criteria, .70 and .50 respectively (See Table 20). Moreover, constructs were significantly correlated in the appropriate direction, therefore providing evidence of nomological validity (See Appendix O). As noted in Appendix M, no threats to discriminant validity were detected.

Issue 7: Examining the Dimensionality and Psychometric Properties of the Indebtedness Items

Table 21: Correlations Among Indebtedness Dimensions

	Estimate
affect <--> behavior	.159
affect <--> cognition	.268
affect <--> duration	.214
behavior <--> cognition	.204
behavior <--> duration	.017
cognition <--> duration	.301

Issue 7 was simultaneously addressed when addressing Issue 6. The twenty-four items of indebtedness were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis to understand the dimensionality and properties of the scale. The results indicated that several items should be removed due to poor loadings (i.e. below .7) or inadequate variance extracted (i.e. squared loadings below .5). This led to a twenty-one measure of indebtedness. Four items with loadings below .7 but above .6 with retained due to face validity. Measurement properties for the retained items can be found in Table 20. Next, these items that constituted the four dimensions (affect, behavior, cognition and duration) of indebtedness were assessed to determine the correlations among the dimensions and to identify whether a second-order model of indebtedness was appropriate. The results indicated acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 321.53$ (183), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06); however the dimensions were inadequately correlated, such that a second-order model of indebtedness was not supported (See Table 21).

Issue 8: Classifying Antecedents as Threatening According to the Threat to Self-Esteem Model

The following analysis examined the relationships among excessive extra-role behavior, consumer norm violation, mutual intentions, vulnerability and comfort to determine whether these antecedents could be classified as threatening according to the threat to self-esteem model. Measurement properties of the items can be found in Table 20 and are described in Issue 6. Since adequate measurement was attained, a structural model was created such that the three antecedents were positioned as exogenous constructs while vulnerability and comfort were positioned as endogenous constructs. The results indicated acceptable model fit, ($\chi^2 = 367.51$ (180), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .07). Critical to the analysis was the assessment of the paths from each antecedent to comfort and vulnerability. The results supported that consumer norm violation and excessive extra-role behavior could be classified as threatening, since each antecedent was significantly ($p < .01$) and positively associated with vulnerability, but negatively or non-significantly associated with comfort. However, the results did not support the classification of mutual intentions, since the path estimates to both comfort and vulnerability were non-significant ($p > .05$). Results from pairwise comparisons suggested that the path estimates to comfort were significantly different from path estimates to vulnerability for excessive extra-role behavior and consumer norm violation. See Table 22 for more details.

Table 22: Standardized Path Estimates Among Indebtedness Antecedents and Comfort and Vulnerability

Antecedent	Comfort	Vulnerability	Critical Ratio of Pairwise Comparisons Parameter Estimates
Mutual Intentions	.128	-.042	-1.701
Excessive Extra-role Behavior	-.322	.411	5.005
Consumer Norm Violation	-.095	.316	3.181

Issue 9: Identifying the Antecedents of Indebtedness

Lastly, a structural model was estimated to test H2a-c by examining the effects of mutual intentions, excessive extra-role behavior, and consumer norm violation on the indebtedness dimensions. As mentioned previously, the indebtedness dimensions failed to correlate highly enough to warrant a second-order model of indebtedness, therefore each indebtedness dimension was a separate endogenous construct. The model indicated acceptable fit, ($\chi^2 = 632.20$ (390), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05) (See Table 20 for measurement properties). Examining the path estimates revealed that mutual intentions had a significant and positive effect on indebtedness behavior (standardized path estimate = .176, $p < .05$), a marginally significant and positive effect on indebtedness cognitions (standardized path estimate = .122, $p = .08$), but no effect on indebtedness duration (standardized path estimate = .080, $p > .50$) and affect (standardized path estimate = -.002, $p > .50$). The results also revealed that consumer norm violation had significant and positive effects on indebtedness affect (standardized path estimate = .268, $p < .05$), cognitions (standardized path estimate = .556, $p < .05$) and duration (standardized path estimate = .273, $p < .05$), but no effect on behavior (standardized path estimate = .162, $p > .50$). Lastly, the results indicated that excessive extra-role behavior had a significant and positive effect on indebtedness affect (standardized path estimate = .291, $p < .05$), but no effects on indebtedness behavior (standardized path estimate = .050, $p > .50$), cognition (standardized path estimate = -.042, $p > .50$), and duration (standardized path estimate = .041, $p > .50$). These results offer support for the main study to be conducted.

Summary of the Findings

This study addressed nine primary issues. The results demonstrated (Issue 1) adequate measurement properties of all constructs in the gratitude model and demonstrated that the developed gratitude measure is related yet distinct from pride and happiness. Furthermore, (Issue 2) gratitude can be represented by a seventeen item measure, and (Issue 3) the developed measure is highly related to the prior three-item gratitude measure. In addition, the results indicate that (Issue 4) benevolent intentions, customization and extra-role behavior can be classified as supportive, and (Issue 5) that customer gratitude is positively affected by customization and benevolent intentions of the service provider, but non-significant results were found for extra-role behavior. The results for indebtedness indicate that (Issue 6) the measurement properties for all constructs were sound and that (Issue 7) indebtedness can be best represented by a twenty-one item measure. Furthermore, the findings reveal that (Issue 8) customer norm violation and excessive extra-role behavior can be classified as threatening, and that (Issue 9) the indebtedness dimensions were positively affected by mutual intentions, excessive extra-role behavior, and consumer norm violation. However, each antecedent did not affect all four of the indebtedness dimensions.

Study 4: Confirmatory Analyses to Finalize the Scale and Assess the Causes of Gratitude and Indebtedness in Marketing Exchanges

A final study was conducted to extend the findings in Study 3 and to address the subsequent issues: (Issue 1) to assess the measurement properties of all constructs in the

gratitude model (See Figure 2) and (Issue 2) to finalize the gratitude scale; (Issue 3) compare the developed and prior measure of gratitude; (Issue 4) distinguish gratitude from indebtedness; (Issue 5) distinguish gratitude from delight; (Issue 6) determine whether marketing antecedents can be classified as supportive according to the threat to self-esteem model; (Issue 7) identify the causes of gratitude; (Issue 8) assess the measurement properties of all constructs in the indebtedness model (See Figure 3); (Issue 9) finalize the indebtedness scale; (Issue 10) compare the developed and prior measure of indebtedness; (Issue 11) determine whether marketing antecedents can be classified as threatening according to the threat to self-esteem model; and (Issue 12) identify the causes of indebtedness.

Sample, Procedures and Measures

Undergraduates at a southeast major state university participating in a subject pool for course credit, recruited three hundred and twenty-one non-student adults to partake in the research. Students adhered to survey criteria by recruiting non-student adults over age twenty-five (Foster 2009, Pounders 2010; Reynolds, Folse, and Jones 2006). The sample was 52% female and the mean age was forty-five. Participants partook in a two surveys. Specifically, after completing survey one, participants clicked on a link that took them to survey two.

Survey one gathered potential covariate and moderator data. Potential covariate and moderator measures (to be assessed in Essay 3) included trait gratitude (items modified from McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang 2002), neuroticism (items modified from Brown et al. 2002) and agreeableness (items modified from Brown et al. 2002). While presented as the first of two surveys, survey one was used as a guise by measuring several items irrelevant to the study (i.e. electronic shopping habits).

Survey two, which was the primary study, collected data to assess the hypotheses. The first page of the second survey stated that the goal of the research was to understand customer interactions with front-line employees. Definitions of front-line employees and interactions, as well as examples of each were provided. Participants were told that the researchers were specifically interested in understanding interactions where the customer felt as though he/she benefited from the front line employee's actions, and that in these situations, customers typically feel grateful (defined as thankful) or indebted (defined as obligated). After providing this information, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions; a 1) gratitude condition, in which participants were instructed to reflect upon and describe a situation where they felt grateful for a front-line employee, or an 2) indebtedness condition, in which participants were instructed to reflect upon and describe a situation where they felt indebted to a front-line employee.

After describing their experience, participants completed several measures, including: emotion, antecedent, threat to self-esteem, outcome (Essay 3), manipulation and discriminant validity checks, and moderation measures (Essay 3). Emotion measures included gratitude and indebtedness items (i.e. measures of affect, behavior, cognition and duration dimensions). Antecedent measures consisted of benevolent and mutualistic intentions (items modified from Lee et al. 2004), extra-role behavior and excessive extra-role behavior (items modified from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003), consumer norm violation, customization and excessive

customization (items modified from Bello and Gilliland 1997, Lusch and Brown 1996, and Pounders 2010). Threat to self-esteem measures, which were included to examine the underlying assumptions of the threat to self-esteem model, included comfort and vulnerability items. Outcome measures (Essay 3) included positive word-of-mouth (items adapted from Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003), loyalty (items adapted from Hess 1998, also used by Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004), and preferential treatment (items adapted from Harris and Goode 2004 and Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996). Manipulation check measures included two items, “Overall, in this situation I felt grateful” and “Overall, in this situation I felt indebted.” Moderation measures (Essay 3) included relationship quality items (items adapted from Palmatier 2008a). Discriminant validity checks included measures of customer delight (items modified from Oliver, Rust, and Varki (1997).

Manipulation Checks

As described above, two manipulation check items were included in the study. Participants that described an experience in which they felt grateful should score higher on the “overall, I felt grateful” item, than participants that described an experience in which they felt indebted. Likewise, participants that described an experience in which they felt indebted should score higher on the “overall, I felt indebted” item, than participants that described an experience in which they felt grateful. To analyze the manipulation checks, participant’s scores were first converted into z-scores (i.e. standardized scores) to demonstrate the how the average score for each condition related to the mean. Then to support the validity of the study, a MANOVA was conducted with the condition—describing a grateful or indebted experience as the independent measure and the two manipulation check items as the dependent measures. The multivariate results indicated a main effect of the condition (Wilks’ $\lambda = .91$; $F(2, 318) = 16.12$; $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .09$), and the univariate results indicated that gratitude [$F(1, 320) = 4.73$; $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .02$], and indebtedness [$F(1, 320) = 28.95$; $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .08$] varied between the two conditions. Specifically, those in the gratitude condition ($\bar{X}_{gratitude}^{27} = .105$) scored higher on the “overall, I feel grateful” item than those in the indebtedness condition ($\bar{X}_{indebtedness} = -.138$); and those in the indebtedness condition ($\bar{X}_{indebtedness} = .319$) scored higher on the “overall, I feel indebted” item than those in the gratitude condition ($\bar{X}_{gratitude} = -.260$). Therefore, these results support that participant’s feelings of gratitude and indebtedness did significantly differ between the two conditions.

Threat to Self-Esteem Checks

As mentioned above, measures of comfort and vulnerability were included to test the underlying assumption of the threat to self-esteem model. In adhering to the threat to self-esteem model, participants in the gratitude condition are expected to score higher than participants in the indebtedness condition on comfort measures, and participants in the indebtedness condition are expected to score higher than participants in the gratitude condition on vulnerability measures. To test this assumption, participants scores were transformed into z-scores (i.e. standardized scores), as was performed for the manipulation checks, and then a MANOVA was conducted with the condition (i.e. gratitude or indebtedness) as the independent measure and the comfort and vulnerability items as the dependent measures. The multivariate results indicated a main

²⁷ \bar{X} refers to the mean of the standardized scores

effect of the condition (Wilks' $\lambda = .97$; $F(2, 318) = 4.54$; $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .03$), and the univariate results indicated that vulnerability [$F(1, 320) = 8.14$; $p < .05$; $\eta_p^2 = .03$], and comfort [$F(1, 320) = 3.52$; $p = .06$; $\eta_p^2 = .01$], varied between the two conditions. Specifically, participants in the gratitude condition ($\bar{X}_{\text{gratitude}} = .09$) felt more comfortable than participants in the indebtedness condition ($\bar{X}_{\text{indebtedness}} = -.12$); and participants in the gratitude condition ($\bar{X}_{\text{gratitude}} = -.14$) felt less vulnerable than participants in the indebtedness condition ($\bar{X}_{\text{indebtedness}} = .17$). These results support that the experience of gratitude and indebtedness is consistent with the threat to self-esteem theory.

Results

Since confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used to analyze the data, the following models were assessed according to the criteria described on pages fifty-nine through sixty. In addition, further criteria were used to examine the validity of a second-order model of gratitude and indebtedness. Researchers advocate that second-order models should yield similar fit to correlated first-order models, as demonstrated through a non-significant χ^2 difference test (Hair et al. 1998; Kidwell, Hardesty, and Childers 2008). Indebtedness was assessed according to this criterion; however gratitude could not be tested following this guideline since the degrees of freedom remain the same for the first and second-order model of gratitude. In these cases, researchers recommend authors to provide theoretical and empirical justification (Johnson, Rosen and Chang 2011). Since this research conceptualizes gratitude as being a superordinate construct (i.e. gratitude causes affective, behavioral and cognitive reactions), the first-order dimensions should be highly correlated; furthermore, factor loadings and reliabilities should be above .7 and .8, respectively (Johnson, Rosen and Chang 2011). Furthermore, support for a second-order is demonstrated when the measurement properties are consistent throughout several samples and the second-order model demonstrates high predictive power (Johnson, Rosen and Chang 2011). The following section will first describe the results for the gratitude model and then describe the results for the indebtedness model.

Gratitude Results

The subsequent analyses address the aforementioned Issues 1-7.

Issue 1: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the Gratitude Model

To address Issue 1, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted that included measures of the following constructs: benevolent intentions, customization, extra-role behavior, the second-order model of gratitude, comfort and vulnerability. The analysis was conducted to specifically examine the measurement properties and discriminant validity of the aforementioned constructs, which set the foundation for subsequent analyses. The model indicated acceptable fit, ($\chi^2 = 759.93(446)$, $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). In support of convergent validity, only two items loaded slightly below .7 (See Table 23). Composite reliabilities were above .70 and the average variance extracted from each construct was greater than .50, therefore supporting construct validity (see Table 23).

In some instances, the squared correlation between constructs was higher than the average variance extracted (See Table 24), indicating a potential threat to discriminant validity. Nonetheless, when constraining the correlation to one, the χ^2 difference test was significant ($p < .01$), indicating significantly worse fit, and thus providing evidence of discriminant validity (See Table 25).

Table 23: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Gratitude Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loadings
Factor: Benevolent Intentions²⁸	AVE = .63; CR = .83
“The front line employee was concerned with my welfare”	.78
“The front line employee’s concern is truly genuine”	.84
The front line employee was looking out for my best interests (added)	.75
Factor: Comfort	AVE = .63; CR = .83
Put me at ease	.86
Made me feel relaxed	.84
Took my worries away	.66
Factor: Vulnerability	AVE = .74; CR = .92
Exposed	.90
Insecure	.82
Vulnerable	.84
Unprotected	.88
Factor: Customization²⁹	AVE = .64; CR = .88
“was flexible in response to my requests”	.79
“modified his service based on my needs”	.78
“was willing to accommodate an unexpected situation”	.73
“was flexible in dealing with me”	.90
Factor: Extra-Role Behavior³⁰	AVE = .57; CR = .80
“Willingly went out of his/her way to make me satisfied”	.80
“Voluntarily assisted me even if it meant going beyond his/her job requirements”	.71
“Went above and beyond the call of duty in servicing me”	.75
Factor: Gratitude Affect	AVE = .54; CR = .78
I am valued	.77
I am special	.68
I am respected	.75
Factor: Gratitude Behavior	AVE = .75; CR = .95
I want to do something to improve the front line employee’s well-being.	.89
I want to help the front line employee out.	.93
I want to do something for the front line employee's benefit.	.86
I want to do something to benefit the front line employee.	.79
I want to return the favor.	.88
I want to do something for the front line employee’s sake.	.84
Factor: Gratitude Cognition	AVE = .77; CR = .95
I think the front line employee is a good person	.86
The front line employee is genuine	.91

²⁸ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004

²⁹ Items adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997; Lusch and Brown 1996; Pounders 2010

³⁰ Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003

Table 23 continued

The front line employee is caring	.88
I think the front line employee is honest	.90
I think the front line employee is respectful	.85
I think the front line employee is thoughtful	.88

Table 24: Testing Discriminant Validity in Gratitude Measurement Model for Essay Two Study 4

	AVE	Gratitude	Vulnerability	Comfort	Customization	Extra-role Behavior
Affect	0.54					
Behavior	0.75					
Cognition	0.77					
Gratitude	.59					
Vulnerability	0.74	0.24				
Comfort	0.63	0.64	0.13			
Customization	0.64	0.53	0.16	0.41		
Extra-role Behavior	0.57	0.58	0.16	0.36	0.45	
Benevolent Intentions	0.63	0.76	0.17	0.59	0.47	0.56

Table 25: $\Delta\chi^2$ Values

Constrained Relationship	$\Delta\chi^2$ Value
Comfort and Gratitude to 1	15.87
Benevolent intentions and gratitude to 1	10.27

Issue 2: Finalizing the Gratitude Scale

While addressing Issue 1, Issue 2 was simultaneously addressed. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the twenty three item measure of gratitude to assess the psychometric properties and dimensionality of the scale. Similar to the findings in Study 3, the results indicated that the duration dimension was not highly correlated with affect, behavior and cognition. Therefore, the duration dimension was removed from the analyses. In assessing the items, the results indicated that two affect items needed to be removed due to low loadings. This included “I feel treasured”, and “I feel supported.” This led to a finalized fifteen item measure of

gratitude (See Table 23). In addition, the affect, behavior and cognition dimensions were significantly ($p < .001$) correlated to warrant a second-order model of gratitude. The fit of the second-order model was acceptable, ($\chi^2 = 178.27$ (87), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .98, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). All items significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to their corresponding factor and all first-order dimensions significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to gratitude (See Figure 5 and Table 23 for an estimate of measurement properties).

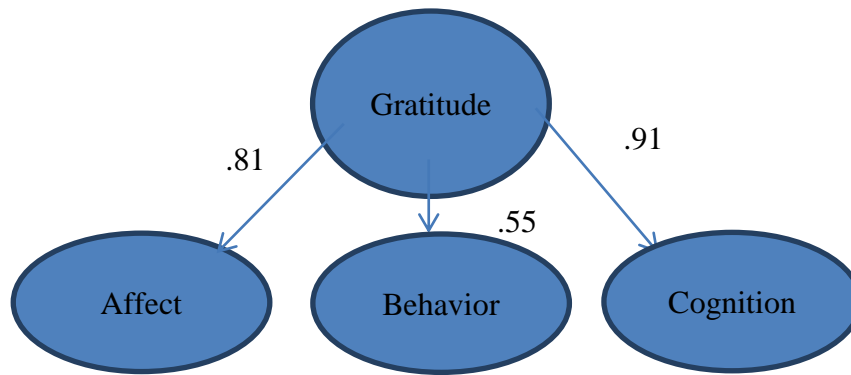


Figure 5: Second-Order Model of Gratitude

Given that the first-order and second-order model of gratitude have the same degrees of freedom, a $\Delta\chi^2$ test could not be performed to support the argument of a second-order model of gratitude, therefore theoretical and empirical justification will be provided. Theoretical justification stems from the findings in Essay One; particularly, the qualitative findings yielded support for the concept of gratitude containing affective, behavioral and cognitive properties. In addition, marketing research investigating the tripartite model of attitudes supports that concepts have affect, behavior and cognitive components (Bagozzi et al. 1979). Furthermore, empirical justification is provided by the high correlations among the first order dimensions and by the factor loadings and reliabilities adhering to recommended criteria of being above .7 and .8, respectively. In addition, data was collected throughout three studies using three different samples, and the measurement properties of the second-order model remained strong. Furthermore, based on the findings in Essay Two and those to be discussed in Essay Three, the second-order construct demonstrates high predictive power, thus offering further empirical justification. Together, these results lend support for a second-order model of gratitude.

Issue 3: Comparing the Developed and Prior Measure of Gratitude

The next analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the developed measure of gratitude and measure used in prior research. The prior measure includes the following three items: grateful, thankful and appreciative. In this analysis, the second-order model of gratitude was correlated with the prior measure (See Figure 6). The results suggested acceptable fit, ($\chi^2 = 283.60$ (131), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). The reliability and average variance extracted of the prior measure was adequate (.80 and .59, respectively). More information regarding measurement properties can be found in Figure 6 and Table 23). Additionally, when examining the correlation between the developed measure and the prior measure, it was clear that

discriminant validity could not be achieved through comparing the squared correlation to average variance extracted. Therefore, a χ^2 difference test was employed which revealed significantly worse fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 6.94$), thus providing evidence of discriminant validity. Altogether, although results supporting discriminant validity are mixed, the high correlation between the developed and prior measure offers support of content validity, such that when one is grateful, the grateful individual feels positive, desires to help the other who made him/her feel grateful, and thinks positively about the other individual.

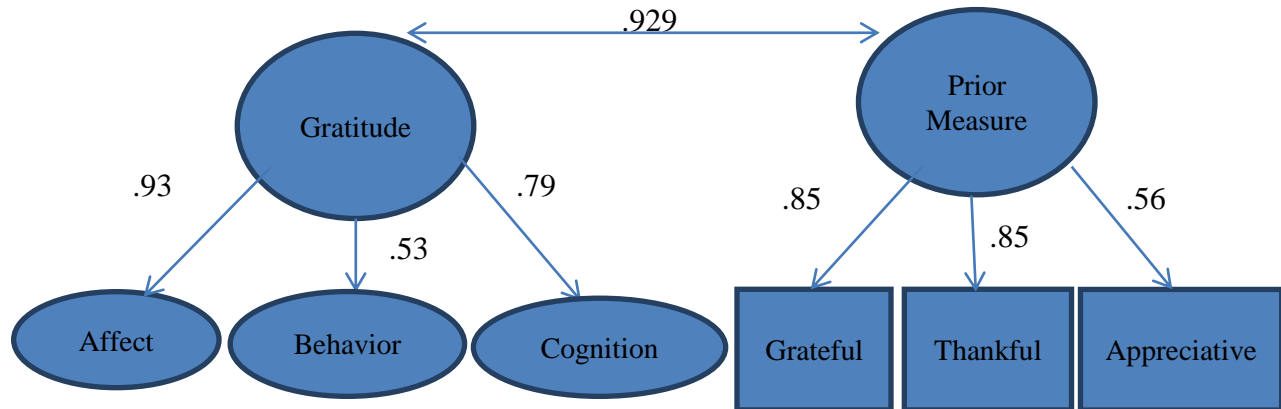


Figure 6: Correlation between Existing and Developed Measure of Gratitude

Issue 4: Distinguishing Gratitude from Indebtedness

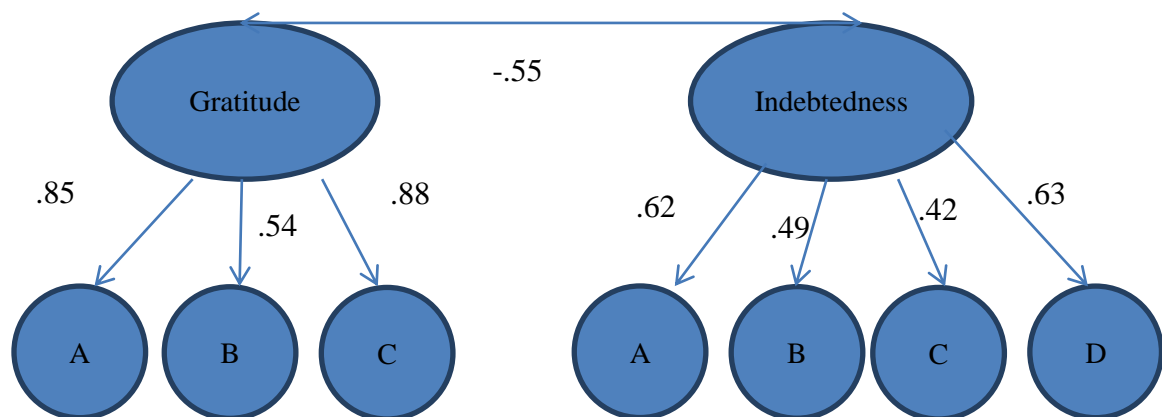


Figure 7: Correlation between Gratitude and Indebtedness

Another issue that needed to be addressed included whether gratitude is truly different than indebtedness. To address this question, a model was created that included both the developed scales of gratitude and indebtedness (See Figure 7). The results indicated acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 798.36$ (519), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .04); but more importantly, the results supported that gratitude and indebtedness are negatively related, and that these constructs are in fact distinct through passing tests of discriminant validity (the squared correlation equaled .30, see Tables 21 and 24 for

average variance extracted). In addition, measurement properties for the first-order loadings can be found in Tables 23 and 28.

Issue 5: Distinguishing Gratitude from Delight

The subsequent analysis examined the relationship between the developed measure of gratitude and customer delight. To assess this relationship, measures of the two constructs were examined in a confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicated poor fit ($\chi^2 = 1168.10$ (271), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .87, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .10). The reliability and average variance extracted for the delight items equaled .81 and .51, respectively (See Table 23 for gratitude measurement properties). When examining the standardized loadings, it became clear that poor fit was likely due to several low loadings for delight items. In fact, four items had loadings $< .7$ (See Table 26). Important to this analysis included studying the correlation between gratitude and delight. The results indicated that gratitude and delight are positively and highly correlated (.763). In fact, the square of the correlation between gratitude and delight was higher than the average variance extracted for each construct, thus indicating a threat to discriminant validity. Therefore, a χ^2 difference test was conducted which indicated a significant ($p < .001$) difference ($\Delta\chi^2 = 19.5$), thus providing evidence of discriminant validity. Although the results provide mixed support of discriminant validity between gratitude and delight, the results do reveal that they are highly related.

Table 26: Measurement Properties for Delight

Factor: Delight Adapted from Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997	Item Loadings
AVE = .51; CR = .81	
“Astonished”	.51
“Surprised”	.42
“Contented”	.59
“Happy”	.78
“Cheerful”	.79
“Pleased”	.70
“Excited”	.84
“Enthused”	.88
“Stimulated”	.68
“Elated”	.78

Issue 6: Classifying Antecedents as Supportive According to the Threat to Self-Esteem Model

The following analysis aimed to determine if benevolent intentions, extra-role behavior and customization could be classified as supportive according to the threat to self-esteem model. To test this classification, a model was created that included benevolent intentions, extra-role behavior and customization as exogenous constructs and comfort and vulnerability as endogenous constructs. The model achieved adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 195.82$ (110), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05); and provided support for benevolent intentions and customization to be classified as supportive. However no supportive was found for extra-role behavior. Specifically, benevolent intentions and customization significantly ($p < .01$) and positively influenced comfort. In addition,

customization significantly ($p = .05$) and negatively affected vulnerability. Benevolent intentions was marginally ($p = .09$) and negatively associated with vulnerability. Extra-role behavior showed no effect on either comfort or vulnerability. Pairwise comparisons were performed on the path estimates from each antecedent to comfort and vulnerability. The results of these comparisons revealed further support for benevolent intentions and customization to be classified as supportive, such that these comparisons showed significant difference (See Table 27).

Table 27: Standardized Path Estimates to Comfort and Vulnerability

Antecedent	Comfort	Vulnerability	Critical Ratio of Pairwise Comparisons Parameter Estimates
Benevolent Intentions	.65	-.19	-5.22
Extra-role Behavior	-.04	-.13	-0.65
Customization	.21	-.18	-3.17

Since previous results revealed mixed support regarding discriminant validity between gratitude and benevolent intentions, benevolent intentions was removed from the above model and the model was re-estimated. The results demonstrated acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 147.49$ (72), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06); and demonstrated that extra-role behavior did in fact have a significant and positive effect on comfort (standardized path estimate = .318, $p < .01$), and a significant and negative effect on vulnerability (standardized path estimate = -.243, $p < .01$). Likewise, similar to the previous model, customization continued to have a significant and positive effect on comfort (standardized path estimate = .425, $p < .01$) and a significant and negative effect on vulnerability (standardized path estimate = -.237, $p < .01$). These results indicate that after removing benevolent intentions, the model supports classifying extra-role behavior and customization as supportive elements in the threat to self-esteem theory.

Issue 7: Identifying the Antecedents of Gratitude

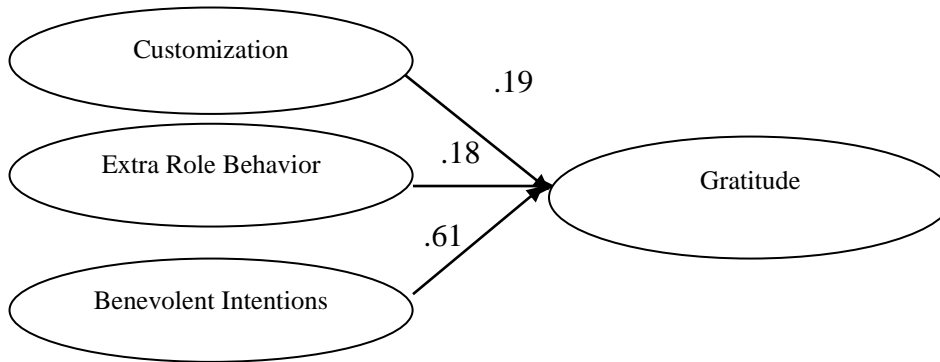


Figure 8: Testing H1a-c

Lastly, to test H1a-c, a final model was estimated that included gratitude as the dependent, endogenous construct, and benevolent intentions, extra-role behavior and customization as the exogenous constructs. The results indicated good model fit ($\chi^2 = 498.27$ (266), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). Critical to the analysis was examining the path estimates between the antecedents and gratitude. In support of hypotheses one, gratitude was significantly ($p < .01$) and

positively affected by benevolent intentions, extra-role behavior and customization (See Figure 8).

Since previous findings demonstrated a threat to discriminant validity between gratitude and benevolent intentions, the above model was re-estimated without benevolent intentions. The results revealed decent fit ($\chi^2 = 556.56$ (225), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .07); and revealed that extra-role behavior (standardized path estimate = .503, $p < .01$) and customization (standardized path estimate = .393, $p < .01$) still positively elicited gratitude. These results offer continued support of H1.

Indebtedness Results

Similar analyses were conducted on the indebtedness items. Since confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used to analyze the data, the following models were assessed according to the criteria described on pages fifty-nine through sixty and seventy-one. The following analyses address Issues 8-12 presented above.

Issue 8: Assessing the Measurement Properties of Constructs in the Indebtedness Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted that included measures of the following constructs: mutual intentions, excessive customization, excessive extra-role behavior, customer norm violations, the second-order model of indebtedness, comfort and vulnerability. The analysis was conducted to specifically examine the measurement properties of the aforementioned constructs and to support the interpretation and validity of the subsequent analyses. The model indicated acceptable fit, ($\chi^2 = 1099.20$ (716), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .04). All items significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to their corresponding construct and most loadings were $> .7$, therefore supporting convergent validity. In support of construct validity, composite reliabilities were greater than .7 and the average variance extracted was greater than .50 for all constructs except for excessive extra-role behavior. The only threat to discriminant validity was noticed between excessive extra-role behavior and excessive customization (See Table 29). Therefore, a χ^2 difference test was performed. The results showed a non-significant ($p > .05$) difference in the χ^2 value ($\Delta\chi^2 = .96$); therefore discriminant validity between excessive extra-role behavior and excessive customization was not supported. Due to its low loadings, low average variance extracted, and failing to pass tests of discriminant validity, excessive extra-role behavior was removed from the following analyses.

Table 28: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Indebtedness Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loading
Factor: Mutual Intentions³¹	AVE = .68; CR = .87
“The front line employee helped because it was mutually beneficial for him/her and me”	.91

³¹ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004

Table 28 continued

"The front line employee offered support because he/she thought it would be beneficial for both parties"	.79
The front line employee helped because he/she gained as well as me"	.78
Factor: Excessive Customization ³²	AVE = .67; CR = .89
Was too "flexible in response to my requests"	.91
Went overboard in accommodating me.	.73
Was too "flexible in dealing with me"	.76
Was so flexible that it was too outside the norm	.87
Factor: Excessive Extra-Role Behavior ³³	AVE = .45; CR = .71
Inappropriately "went above and beyond the call of duty"	.64
"Went out of his/her way" too much in order to help me	.61
Engaged in behaviors that were too outside the norm	.76
Factor: Consumer Norm Violation	AVE = .74; CR = .92
I feel like I didn't fulfill my role.	.76
I feel as if I might have done something wrong.	.87
I feel as though I violated an expectation.	.91
I feel as though I didn't live up to my part.	.90
Factor: Comfort	AVE = .63; CR = .84
Put me at ease	.87
Made me feel relaxed	.83
Took my worries away	.67
Factor: Vulnerability	AVE = .74; CR = .92
Exposed	.91
Insecure	.82
Vulnerable	.85
Unprotected	.87
Factor: Indebtedness Affect	AVE = .64; CR = .91
Constrained	.77
I feel like something is hanging over my head	.78
Tense	.76
Bothered	.80
Trapped	.81
I feel like my hands are tied	.85
Factor: Indebtedness Behavior	AVE = .55; CR = .78
My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit me.	.76
I want my actions to benefit me.	.73
I want to do something for my sake.	.73
Factor: Indebtedness Cognition	AVE = .65; CR = .88
I am thinking about resolving the position I am in.	.77
I am thinking about handling my relationship with the other party.	.71
I am thinking about settling my relationship with the other party.	.89
I am thinking about clearing up my relationship with the other party	.84
Factor: Indebtedness Duration	AVE = .67; CR = .92
Doing something for the other person would immediately rid this feeling.	.88
After I return the favor, I will no longer feel this way.	.85
I'll feel differently the sooner I do something for the other person.	.80
Once I do something to repay the other party, I won't feel this way anymore.	.83
This feeling will go away after I reciprocate.	.74
This emotion will disappear after I do something for the other person.	.81

³² Items adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997; Lusch and Brown 1996; Pounders 2010

³³ Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003

Table 29: Testing Discriminant Validity in Indebtedness Measurement Model for Essay Two Study 4

	AVE	I. ³⁴	V.	C.	E.E.R.	E.C.	C.N.V.	M.I.
Affect	0.64							
Behavior	0.55							
Cognition	0.65							
Duration	0.67							
Indebtedness								
Vulnerability	0.75	0.45						
Comfort	0.63	0.14	0.14					
Excessive Extra-Role Behavior	0.45	0.32	0.24	0.04				
Excessive Customization	0.67	0.26	0.29	0.06	0.52			
Consumer Norm Violation	0.74	0.37	0.45	0.06	0.23	0.3		
Mutual Intentions	0.68	0.07	.01	0	0.08	0.03	0	
Comfort	0.63	0.14	0.14					

Issue 9: Finalizing the Indebtedness Scale

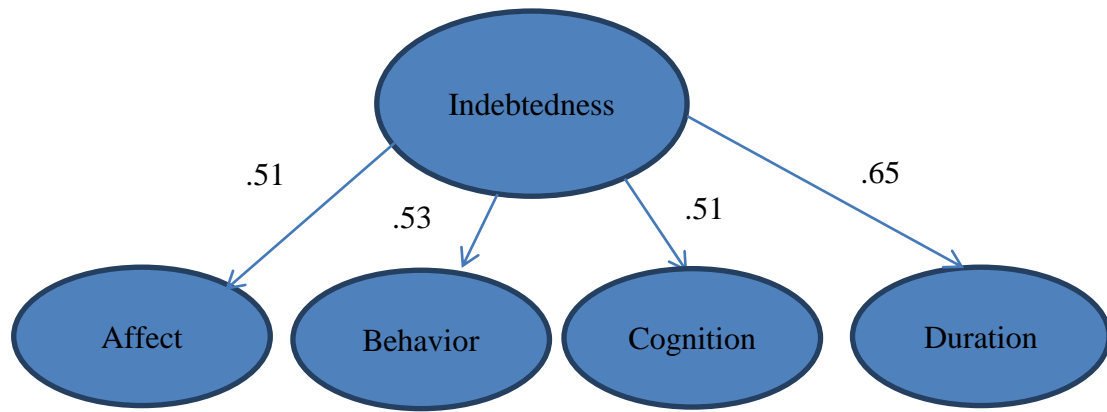


Figure 9: Second-Order Model of Indebtedness

Issue 9 was simultaneously addressed while attending to Issue 8. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the twenty-one item measure of indebtedness. The results indicated that one behavior item “My goal is to improve my well-being” and one cognition item “I think I owe the mechanic” needed to be removed due to inadequate loadings ($< .7$). Another confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with these items removed. The results indicated good fit ($\chi^2 = 175.19$ (146), $p = .05$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .99, root mean square error of

³⁴ I = Indebtedness; V = Vulnerability; C = Comfort; E.E.R. = Excessive Extra-Role Behavior; E.C. = Excessive Customization; C.N.V = Customer Norm Violation; and M.I. = Mutual Intentions

approximation [RMSEA] = .03) (See Table 28 for measurement properties). The next step was to position indebtedness as a second-order model. Good fit was attained by the second-order model, ($\chi^2 = 178.94$ (148), $p = .04$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .99, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .03). Importantly, a chi-square difference test between the first-order and second-order model indicated a non-significant difference ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1.88$). Thus, offering evidence that a second-order model of indebtedness is warranted. Additionally, items loaded significantly ($p < .001$) to their corresponding first-order factor, and the first-order dimensions significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to the second-order indebtedness construct (See Figure 9 and Table 28). However, the loadings to the second-order indebtedness construct were not as high as the second-order loadings as noted for gratitude.

Issue 10: Comparing the Developed and Prior Measure of Indebtedness

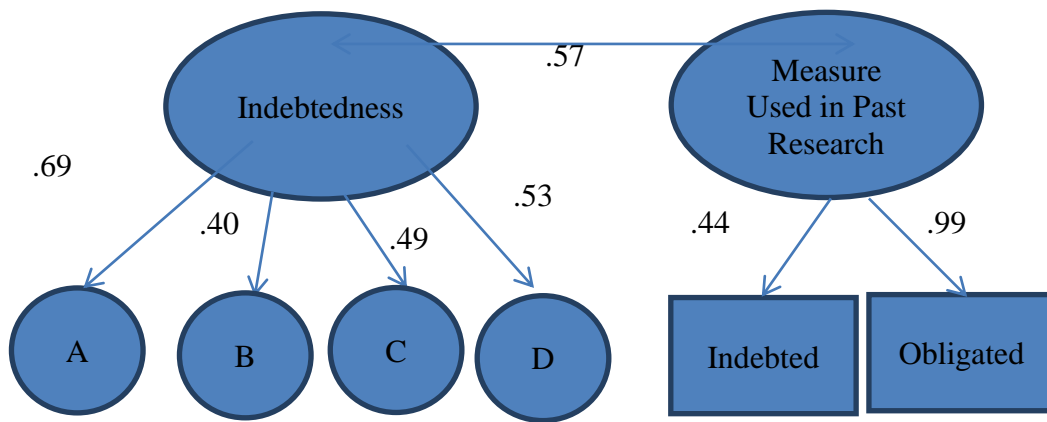


Figure 10: Correlation between Existing and Developed Measure of Indebtedness

The next analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the developed measure of indebtedness and the measure used in prior research. The measure used in prior research includes two items: indebted and obligated. In this analysis, the second-order model of indebtedness was correlated with the construct used past research (See Figure 10). The results suggested acceptable fit, ($\chi^2 = 253.83$ (184), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .98, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .03). The measurement properties of the developed indebtedness scale are provided in Table 28; the measure used in prior research demonstrated adequate reliability and average variance extracted, .71 and .59, respectively. Additionally, when examining the correlation between the developed measure of indebtedness and the measure used in prior research, it was clear that these constructs were highly correlated (.57); however not to the extent that discriminant validity was threatened. Given the high correlation, the results suggest that customer felt indebtedness can be conceptualized as an uncomfortable and un-enduring emotion that is accompanied by thoughts about the inequity within the relationship between him/herself and the front-line employee, and having the intent to benefit's own welfare.

Issue 11: Classifying Antecedents as Threatening According to the Threat to Self-Esteem Model

The subsequent analysis aimed to determine if mutual intentions, excessive customization, and consumer norm violation could be classified as threatening according to the threat to self-esteem model. To test this classification, a model was created that included mutual intentions, excessive customization, and consumer norm violation as exogenous constructs and comfort and vulnerability as endogenous constructs. The model achieved adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 274.75$ (126), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06) (See Table 28 for items and measurement properties); and provided support for excessive customization and consumer norm violation to be classified as threatening. However, no classification could be provided for mutual intentions. Specifically, excessive customization and consumer norm violation significantly ($p < .001$) and positively influenced vulnerability. In addition, consumer norm violation negatively impacted comfort ($p < .05$) and excessive customization marginally ($p = .07$) and negatively affected comfort. Mutual intentions showed non-significant ($p > .05$) relationships with both comfort and vulnerability. Pairwise comparisons were performed on the path estimates from each antecedent to comfort and vulnerability. The results of these comparisons revealed further support for excessive customization and consumer norm violation to be classified as threatening, such that the path estimates were significantly different (See Table 30).

Table 30: Standardized Path Estimates to Comfort and Vulnerability

Antecedent	Comfort	Vulnerability	Critical Ratio of Pairwise Comparisons Parameter Estimates
Mutual Intentions	.02	.05	.315
Excessive Customization	-.16	.23	4.00
Consumer Norm Violation	-.16	.54	6.97

Issue 12: Identifying the Antecedents of Indebtedness

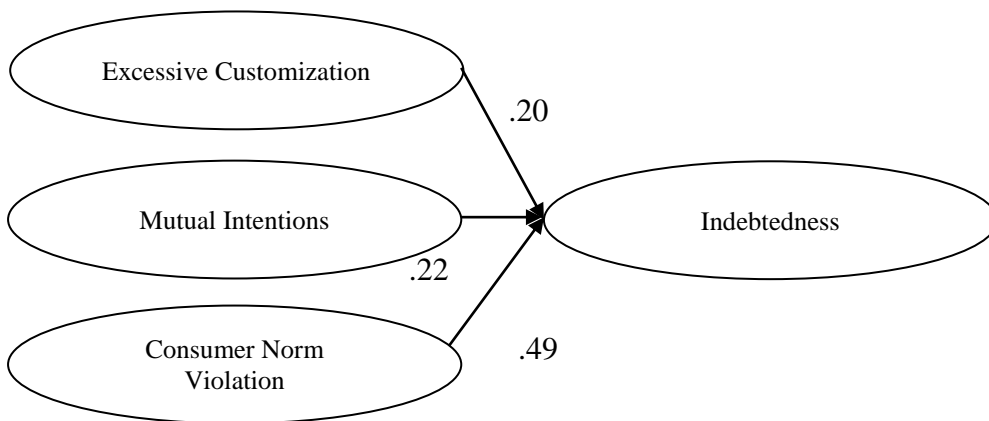


Figure 11: Testing H2a, H2c and H2d

Lastly, to test H2a-d, a final model was estimated that included indebtedness as the dependent, endogenous construct, and mutual intentions, excessive customization, and consumer norm violation as the exogenous constructs. Note, as mentioned above, excessive extra-role

behavior did not possess adequate measurement properties and was removed from the analysis; therefore H2b could not be tested. The results indicated good model fit ($\chi^2 = 606.29$ (395), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .04). Critical to the analyses was examining the path estimates between the antecedents and indebtedness. In support of H2a, H2c and H2d, indebtedness was significantly ($p < .05$) and positively affected by excessive customization, mutual intentions and consumer norm violation (See Figure 11).

Summary of the Findings

This study addressed twelve primary issues. The findings suggest (Issue 1) adequate measurement properties of the constructs included in the gratitude model, and indicate that (Issue 2) gratitude is best operationalized as having affective, behavioral and cognitive components. The results demonstrate that (Issue 3) the developed fifteen item measure of gratitude is highly correlated with the existing three item measure of gratitude used in prior research. This finding provides content validity to the scale, such that the affective, behavioral and cognitive dimensions represent gratitude. The results also demonstrate that (Issue 4) customer felt gratitude is distinct from indebtedness and (Issue 5) delight. Furthermore, the findings suggest (Issue 6) that benevolent intentions, customization and extra-role behavior can be classified as supportive elements in the threat to self-esteem model; and that (Issue 7) benevolent intentions, customization and extra-role behavior elicit customer gratitude.

The findings from the analyses also demonstrate (Issue 8) adequate measurement properties of the constructs included in the indebtedness model, and that (Issue 9) indebtedness is best represented as multidimensional construct consisting of affective, behavioral, cognitive and duration dimensions. The results also revealed that (Issue 10) the developed measure of indebtedness is similar to the measure used in prior research, which includes two items: indebted and obligated. Furthermore, the findings (Issue 11) support the classification of excessive customization and consumer norm violation as threatening elements in the threat to self-esteem model, and indicate that (Issue 12) indebtedness is elicited by excessive customization, consumer norm violation and mutual intentions.

DISCUSSION

This essay provides substantial contributions by offering two comprehensive scales that are applicable to any discipline and by identifying causes of customer felt gratitude and indebtedness in a relationship marketing paradigm. Prior research has failed to empirically examine the measurement of gratitude and indebtedness and has often equated these emotions as being the same. Through four studies, the current research demonstrates that gratitude and indebtedness are distinct constructs, and demonstrates this by offering separate scales for each emotion and by identifying unique antecedents to each emotion. To date, this is the first research in marketing to simultaneously examine customer felt gratitude and indebtedness and the generation of these emotions in exchanges. This research offers significant theoretical and managerial contributions.

Theoretical Contributions

Theoretically, this essay makes several contributions to the field. First, the current research is the first research to comprehensively measure customer felt gratitude and indebtedness, to empirically distinguish between these emotions and their causes, to demonstrate how gratitude and indebtedness differ from other emotions (i.e. pride, happiness, and delight) and to position both emotions into a nomological model of relationship marketing. In addition, this research makes a contribution applicable to several disciplines by offering researchers thorough measures of gratitude and indebtedness that can be used in future research.

Moreover, as described in Essay One, four fundamental deficiencies exist when examining the research on gratitude and indebtedness in marketing and psychology. The current research specifically addresses two of these fundamental deficiencies. One deficiency noted in psychology and marketing research is that there are problematic measures of gratitude and indebtedness. These emotions lack comprehensive scales and are often measured and combined into one overarching construct. For instance, gratitude is often measured using a combination of thankful, appreciative, and grateful, while indebtedness is often measured using and indebted and obligated to measure indebtedness. The current research addresses this deficiency by yielding more comprehensive measures of each emotion and by demonstrating that inclusive measures of gratitude include affective, behavioral and cognitive components, while comprehensive measures of indebtedness include affective, behavioral, cognitive and duration components. Moreover, through demonstrating unique antecedents and distinct measures, the current research verifies the problem of equating these emotions.

Another deficiency noted in extant literature is that research demonstrates several issues regarding the antecedents of these emotions. There are conflicting findings regarding how benevolent intentions of the other exchange party impact gratitude and indebtedness, and limited constructs have been investigated as possible antecedents to these emotions. The current research addresses this issue by empirically demonstrating that benevolent intentions is a critical antecedent to gratitude, but that mutual intentions a critical antecedent to indebtedness. Moreover, the current research identifies new and unique antecedents to each emotion, which provides a deeper understanding of how these emotions are elicited in exchange contexts. Specifically, this research identified that other antecedents to gratitude besides benevolent intentions include customization and extra-role behavior. Likewise, this research also identified that consumer norm violation, mutual intentions and excessive customization elicit indebtedness. Ultimately, these findings offer clarity to the gratitude and indebtedness literature and provide a further understanding of the causes of these emotions.

Managerial Contributions

Additionally, this essay offers several managerial contributions. By identifying behaviors that generate gratitude and indebtedness, this essay helps organizations develop strategies aimed to leverage customer felt gratitude or mitigate customer felt indebtedness. Most suitably, this essay substantially contributes to the services and retailing literature by identifying behaviors that organizations may want to exemplify in interactions with customers. Service providers and front line employees (here after FLE) often engage in interactions with consumers; and as a

result, there are likely to be several instances in which a service provider or FLE provides a benefit to a customer, and in return, a customer feels either grateful or indebted. The current research demonstrates differences between customer felt gratitude and indebtedness and the conditions that provoke each emotion. Ultimately, this research offers a prescription for service provider or FLE behavior aimed to leverage customer felt gratitude or mitigate customer felt indebtedness, such that gratitude can be elicited through a FLE's benevolent intentions, customizing service to a customer's needs and engaging in extra-role behavior. Likewise, managers should shy away from service providers or FLE's engaging in excessive customization, having mutual intentions, or making the customer feel as though he/she violated an expectation, all which were found to cause indebtedness.

In addition, this research offers implications for employee training programs. Particularly, the current research demonstrates that organizations may desire to train employees to engage in behaviors that elicit gratitude, such as training employees to show genuine concern for the customer, how to be flexible and accommodating to a customer's needs, and how to appropriately go beyond expected job requirements. In addition, organizations may want to implement training programs that teach employees to restrain from engaging in too much customization or demonstrating mutual intentions. Likewise, it may be beneficial to train employee actions or sayings that make the customer feel as though he/she did not commit an exchange violation.

CONCLUSION

This essay was conducted to develop comprehensive measures gratitude and indebtedness to provide insight to how these emotions are elicited in customer relationships. By following the scale development process using expert judges and a series of studies, this research demonstrates that gratitude and indebtedness can be comprehensively measured using fifteen item and nineteen item scales, respectively. The results also indicate that gratitude and indebtedness do have unique antecedents. Customer felt gratitude can be elicited by benevolent intentions, customization and extra-role behavior, while customer felt indebtedness can be elicited by mutual intentions, excessive customization and customer norm violations. This research makes several theoretical and managerial contributions. Theoretically, this research contributes to the field by being the first marketing research to empirically distinguish between customer felt gratitude and indebtedness, through differentiating the causes of each emotion and by offering distinct and comprehensive measures of each emotion. Managerially, this essay identifies behaviors that provoke customer felt gratitude and indebtedness, which will assist organizations in developing strategies or training programs aimed to leverage customer felt gratitude or mitigate customer felt indebtedness.

ESSAY THREE

GRATITUDE VERSUS INDEBTEDNESS: DIFFERENCES IN EXCHANGE OUTCOMES

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, relationship marketing is a prevalent topic in marketing research, and studies indicate several benefits of relationship marketing activities. However limited research has examined how customer felt gratitude and indebtedness may be associated with benefits of relationship marketing activities. Gratitude and indebtedness are two emotions that have been argued to give rise to reciprocal behaviors (Greenberg 1980; Morales 2005; Palmatier et al. 2009), and although reciprocity is the theoretical foundation of most relationship marketing research (Palmatier et al. 2009), no research simultaneously incorporates these emotions into a nomological model of relationship marketing activities. Given the relationships among gratitude, indebtedness and reciprocal behavior, it is expected that these emotions provide further explanation to how relationship marketing activities yield positive outcomes.

The fundamental purpose of this research is to further understand and explain the relationships between antecedents and consequences explored in previous relationship marketing research with the threat to self-esteem model. In doing so, this research first examines whether important marketing constructs identified in the literature and Essay One can be classified as supportive or threatening and, ultimately, produce positive (negative) effects on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment. Second, this research aims to identify if gratitude and indebtedness mediate these relationships, while also examining the moderating impact of relationship quality.

To fulfill these objectives, two studies were conducted. First, Study 1 was performed to explore the relationships among gratitude, indebtedness and desirable marketing outcomes. This was followed by Study 2 that was designed to further examine these relationships and investigate how the effects of relationship quality and personality traits may moderate these relationships. This research provides significant contributions by being the first marketing research to simultaneously examine the effects of gratitude and indebtedness, to demonstrate that these emotions lead to different outcomes and to position these emotions into a nomological model of relationship marketing that provides further explanation as to how relationship marketing activities yield positive outcomes.

This essay is structured in the following manner. First, two conceptual models illustrating the significance of gratitude and indebtedness in relationship marketing will be detailed. In this section various drivers (e.g. customization, extra-role behavior, benevolent intentions, norm violations and mutual intentions) of relational outcomes (e.g. customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and customer preferential treatment toward firms) as well as hypotheses will be presented. Following this section, the methodology used to address the research hypotheses will be described. This section will detail the specifics of the two studies that were conducted, including the objectives, procedures, analyses and results of each study. Next a discussion is presented that describes the theoretical and managerial implications of the research, along with describing how

the current research addresses fundamental deficiencies in the marketing and psychology literature. Lastly, a conclusion of the essay is provided.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual models presented in Figures 12 and 13, are structured in agreement with the threat to self-esteem model (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983). The threat to self-esteem model is a theory often used in the helping behavior literature to provide an explanation of recipient' reactions to help. Particularly, the theory describes that receiving help is not always a positive experience (Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010); instead, helping can lead to either positive or negative recipient reactions. According to this theory, from the recipients' viewpoint, helping situations include a mixture of both self-supportive and self-threatening elements. Supportive elements generate positive and comfortable recipient states whereas threatening elements generate negative and vulnerable recipient states. Situational conditions, including aid characteristics, donor characteristics, recipient characteristics and context characteristics associated with the help determine the magnitude of self-threat or self-support in help experiences. To the extent that the magnitude of supportive elements is greater than threatening elements in a helping situation, favorable, non-defensive recipient reactions will occur. On the other hand, when self-threatening elements dominate the supportive elements, negative, defensive recipient reactions occur. Help is deemed supportive when the recipient feels appreciated and cared for, while help is deemed threatening when the recipient feels inferior and overly dependent (Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010).

Although marketing research has not classified constructs as supportive or threatening, it appears that this categorization is possible. Marketing research has often studied interactions between service-providers (i.e. front-line employees, sales representatives, etc.) and customers in an attempt to understand how these interactions can warrant positive outcomes. In service provider-customer interactions, service providers can engage in behaviors or possess characteristics that make the customer feel appreciated and cared for, thus terming these situations as supportive according to the threat to self-esteem model. However, when interacting with customers, service providers can also perform behaviors or possess characteristics that make the customer feel inferior or dependent upon the service provider. Thus, theory would classify these situations as threatening. Although several marketing constructs can likely be classified as supportive or threatening, this research will examine a few notable constructs. This research will examine the marketing constructs that emerged from Essay One, and based on the threat to self-esteem model, are expected to be classified as either supportive or threatening.

The three dependent measures of customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment were selected for the following reasons. First, customer loyalty, which refers to a consumer's psychological commitment to a store (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004), is a valuable construct that receives great attention from both practitioners and marketing researchers (Melnyk, van Osselaer and Bijmolt 2009; Oliver 1999; Reichheld 2001). Singlehandedly, United States companies spend over \$1.2 billion annually on customer loyalty programs (Wagner, Hennig-Thurau and Rudolph 2009). Second, positive word-of-mouth, which refers to a consumer speaking favorably about something (e.g. front-line employees, service providers, brands, companies, sales representatives) (Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003), is also a

prolific construct studied in marketing research. Word-of-mouth is extremely persuasive to consumers. Consumers consider word-of-mouth to be very credible (Pruden and Vavra 2004) and positive word-of-mouth has been argued to be nine times more effective than traditional advertising (Day 1971). Lastly, preferential treatment refers to a consumer perceiving a company as his/her primary option and selecting the company opposed to its competitors (Harris and Goode (2004). Preferential treatment is often viewed as part of the conceptualization of customer loyalty (Melnik, Oseelaer, and Bijmolt 2009), however, this research specifically looks at preferential treatment in terms of consumer preference towards a service provider over others. Preferential treatment was also selected based on its emergence in Essay One. It is a relatively unexplored construct, yet possesses significant implications for research and practice. Table 31 illustrates antecedent-consequence relationships for the identified constructs examined in this Essay that have been supported in the relationship marketing literature. More importantly, these supported relationships are consistent with the threat to self-esteem model and they, as well as others in the model, will be assessed in accordance to that theory.

Table 31: Studied Relationships in the Relationship Marketing Literature

Antecedent	Loyalty	Positive Word-of-Mouth	Preferential Treatment
Customization	√		
Extra Role Behavior		√	
Benevolent Intentions	√	√	
Excessive Customization			
Excessive Extra Role Behavior			
Consumer Norm Violations			
Mutual Intentions			

The following section will detail each construct in the conceptual models (See Figures 12 and 13) as well as expand upon the research hypotheses. First, an explanation of why customization, extra-role behavior, and benevolent intentions can be classified as supportive elements and are posited to be positively associated with loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment will be provided. Subsequently, an explanation as to why too much customization, extra-role behavior, as well as mutualistic intentions and customer norm violations can be considered threatening elements and are expected to be negatively associated with loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment will be given. Next, an explanation will be offered as to why gratitude and indebtedness are predicted to mediate these direct relationships. Lastly, moderation of these expected relationships will be discussed.

Supportive Elements in Helping Encounters

Relationship marketing literature has often examined business-to-customer interactions to identify service provider (i.e. front-line employee, sales representative) characteristics that elicit positive marketing outcomes. For instance, customization, extra-role behavior and benevolent intentions are characteristics of a service-provider-customer interaction that have been found to lead to positive outcomes (Ball, Coelho, and Vilares 2006; Maxham and Netemeyer 2003; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol 2002). In agreement with the threat to self-esteem model, when a service provider engages in these behaviors or possesses these characteristics, it can signal to a customer that he/she is appreciated and cared for. Thus customization, extra-role behavior and

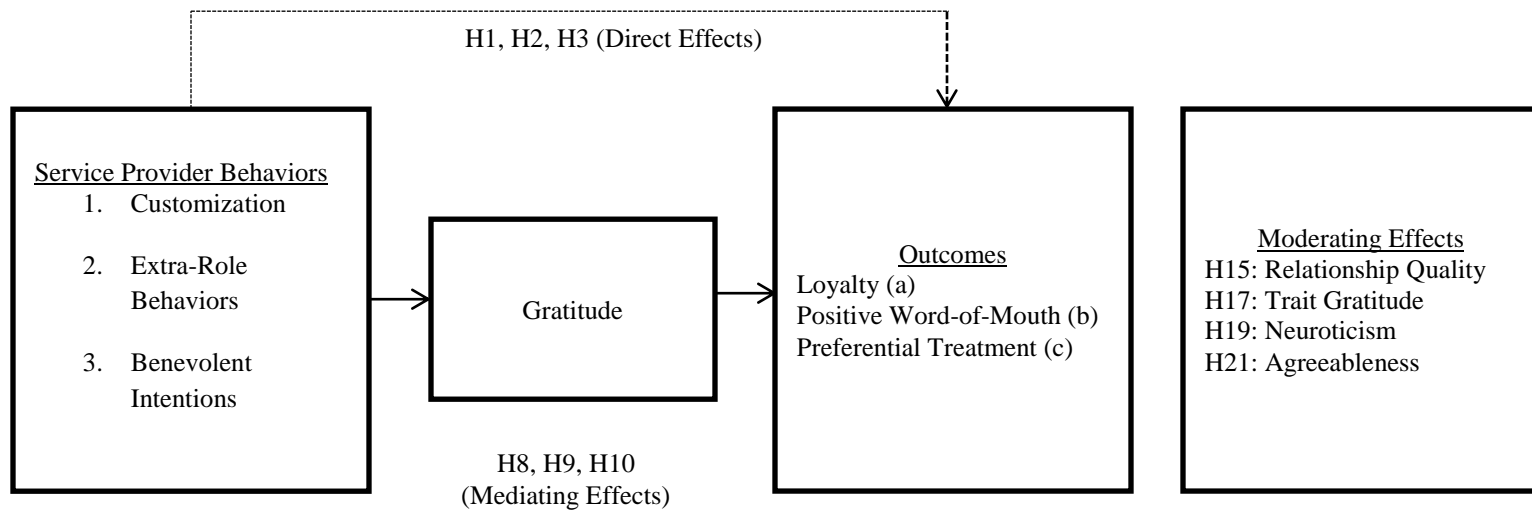


Figure 12: Conceptual Model of Gratitude and Proposed Hypotheses

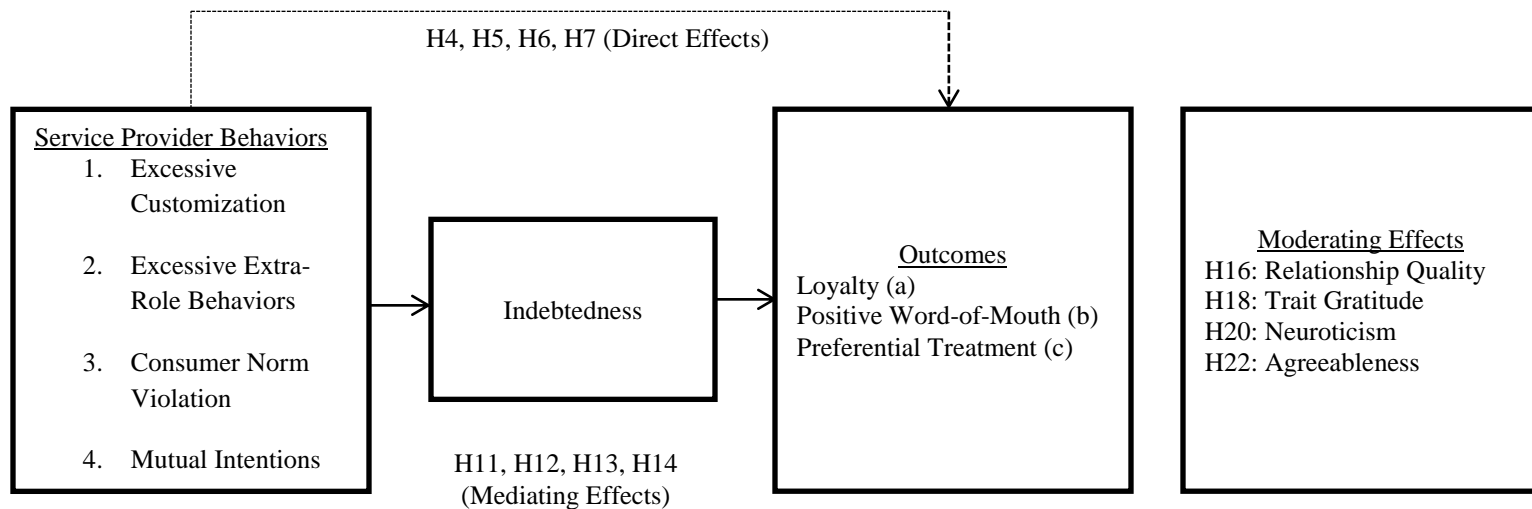


Figure 13: Conceptual Model of Indebtedness and Proposed Hypotheses

and benevolent intentions can be considered supportive elements of a helping encounter, such as those that occur between a service provider and customer. As a result of being supportive, these constructs should lead to positive customer reactions, and research supports positive relationships between these constructs and marketing outcomes. The following section will highlight past research on these constructs and present corresponding hypotheses that are largely founded on the threat to self-esteem model.

Customization

Customization is conceptualized as “any creation or adjustment of a service to fit the individual requirements of a customer” (Ball, Coelho, and Vilares 2006, p. 391). Customization, often considered personalization, is similar to the flexibility construct examined in the business-to-business marketing literature (Lusch and Brown 1996; Heide 1994; Bello and Gilliland 1997), and has been demonstrated to have positive effects on satisfaction (Ball, Coelho, and Vilares 2006), trust (Ball, Coelho, and Vilares 2006; Doney and Cannon 1997), loyalty (Ball, Coelho, and Vilares 2006), and future purchase intentions (Doney and Cannon 1997). Srinivasan, Anderson, and Ponnnavolu (2002) list several explanations as to why positive effects stem from customization. First, customization increases the likelihood that consumers will find an item they desire to purchase. Second, customization can also indicate high quality and generate a better fit between the customer and the product (Ostrom and Iacobucci 1995). Third, when considering customization on websites, transactions become much more efficient. In the business-to-business literature, Doney and Cannon (1997) also explain why customization can lead to favorable outcomes. Particularly, Doney and Cannon (1997) consider idiosyncratic investments, which they posit may include specialized equipment or adapting production process to fulfill a buyer’s needs. Research indicates that opportunistic behavior is unlikely when a firm has engaged in idiosyncratic investments, since such behavior threatens relationship continuance (Doney and Cannon 1997; Williamson 1985). In addition, idiosyncratic investments can indicate that a firm is trustworthy, cares about the relationship and is willing to make sacrifices (Ganesan 1994). The threat to self-esteem model provides another explanation to the positive effect of customization. Customization can signal to a customer that the service provider appreciates and cares for him/her. Thus, following the threat to self-esteem theory, customization can be considered a supportive element and generate positive outcomes. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented:

H₁: Customization positively impacts a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

Extra-Role Behavior

Extra-role behavior refers to “discretionary behaviors of contact employees in servicing customers that extend beyond formal role requirements” (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997, p. 41). Extra-role behaviors have also been defined as organizational citizenship behaviors, prosocial behaviors and contextual performance (Maxham and Netemeyer 2003). Marketing research continually stresses that going “above and beyond the call of duty” can lead to positive customer responses (Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault 1990; Bettencourt and Brown 1997; Maxham and Netemeyer 2003; Price, Arnould, and Deibler 1995). Past research has found extra-role

behaviors to be positively associated with customer satisfaction (Bettencourt and Brown 1997; Maxham and Netemeyer 2003), purchase intent and favorable word-of-mouth (Maxham and Netemeyer 2003). Research in a complaint handling context indicates that the effects of extra role behavior on satisfaction, purchase intent and positive word-of-mouth can be explained by customer perceived justice (Maxham and Netemeyer 2003); however, the threat to self-esteem model can offer another explanation. Service providers going beyond the call of duty to help the customer can signal to a customer that he/she is appreciated and cared for; thus terming extra-role behavior as supportive. As a result, extra-role behavior should generate positive outcomes. Thus, consistent with the threat to self-esteem model, the following hypothesis is presented:

H₂: Extra-role behavior positively impacts a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

Benevolent Intentions

Benevolent intent, often referred to as altruism, is conceptualized as service provider (i.e. front-line employee, sales representative) helping behavior that enhances the well-being of a customer and the service provider expects nothing in return. This conceptualization is a modified version of the definition provided in Lee et al. (2004) in studying benevolence in importer and exporter relationships. Frequently, benevolence is characterized as an individual wanting to do good for another, beyond possessing an egocentric motive (Jarvenpaa, Knoll, and Leidner 1998; Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995). Benevolence has also been considered a dimension of trust (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol 2002), and has been shown to lead to several positive outcomes. Past research indicates that benevolence is associated with higher relationship performance (Lee et al. 2004), value (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol 2002) loyalty (Bell, Seigyoung, and Smalley 2005³⁵; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol 2002), satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth (Hausman 2004³⁶). Benevolence has also been studied in sponsorships, and has been found to be related to favorable perceived community relations (Dean 2002), sponsor credibility and attitude towards the sponsor (Rifon et al. 2004). Research explains that positive effects of benevolent intentions occur because benevolent behaviors signal “pro-consumer motivations, restraint on self-serving opportunism, and a willingness to assume fiduciary responsibility,” (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol 2002, p. 18). An explanation of the positive outcomes associated with benevolent intentions can be offered by the threat to self-esteem theory. A customer that perceives a service provider as wanting to do good for him/her can indicate to the customer that the service provider truly appreciates and cares for him/her. Adhering to the threat to self-esteem theory, benevolent intentions could be classified as supportive and lead to positive consequences. Therefore, consistent with the threat to self-esteem theory, I propose:

H₃: Benevolent intent positively impacts a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

³⁵ The measure of functional service quality used by Bell, Seigyoung, and Smalley (2005) includes components of benevolence

³⁶ Hausman (2004) measured Social Aspects of Professional Services Relationships (SAPSR), which included typical measures of benevolence

Threatening Elements in Helping Encounters

Although relationship marketing literature has yet to identify constructs or service provider characteristics as threatening, the threat to self-esteem model does suggest that these conditions exist. First, while not conceptualized in terms of threats, prior research and theory have identified factors that produce unfavorable relationship marketing outcomes, such as norm violations. In fact, interactions can be classified as threatening when a customer feels inferior and/or overly dependent on a service provider. As mentioned previously, threatening elements generate negative and vulnerable recipient states. As a result of being considered threatening, negative customer reactions occur. Therefore, a service provider engaging in too much customization or extra-role behavior, or when a service provider possesses mutual intentions-helping to help him/herself and the customer, or a customer violates an expected norm, a customer is likely to feel inferior or overly dependent. Thus, according to the threat to self-esteem theory, these constructs can be classified as threatening and generate negative customer reactions. The following section will detail these constructs and present concurring research hypotheses.

Excessive Customization and Extra-Role Behavior

Excessive customization is conceptualized as adjusting a service or a product beyond a customer's desire. In essence, excessive customization refers to a service provider as being "too flexible" from a customer's point of view. Excessive extra-role behavior refers to a service provider performing behaviors that are irrelevant to his/her role from the customer's perspective. In other words, the service provider is performing behaviors that are too far outside of expected role behaviors. Therefore, providing the "right amount" of help, or knowing what is considered appropriate to the customer may be critical to eliciting favorable customer reactions. Excessive customization and extra-role behavior were found to be present when informants described indebtedness experiences in Essay One. As detailed in Essay One, Brooke stated that a bank was too accommodating; she mentioned, "So they finagled kind of for us. It seemed like they kind of broke a rule for us." This experience coincides with the concept of excessive customization. Another example from Brooke highlights excessive extra-role behavior. Brooke states, "This one guy went out of his way to try to help me get a job. The manager of the bank, he called our house personally and said that his school was looking for a math teacher. So he passed on my resume to his kid's school. This was just a bank." When a service provider helps too much, such as engaging in too much customization, being too flexible or going too far beyond typical job responsibilities, it is likely that his/her behavior makes the customer feel inferior or overly dependent; thus, theory would classify these service-provider behaviors as threatening, and negative customer reactions are expected to occur. Therefore, I present the following hypotheses:

H₄: Too much customization negatively impacts a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

H₅: Too much extra-role behavior negatively impacts a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

Customer Norm Violations

Norm violations refer to a customer's violation of an exchange expectation. Research supports that norm violations tend to produce negative outcomes. For instance, studies in consumer brand relationships have indicated that a brand's norm violation can lead to negative customer evaluations of the brand (Aggarwal 2004). In addition, research examining business-to-business relationships has demonstrated that a buyer's purchase intentions are negatively related to salesperson norm violations (Trawick et al. 1991).

Norms are important because they often govern behavior either externally or internally (Trawick et al. 1991). Trawick et al. (1991) explains that externally implies that rewards and punishments are distributed by another party and that rewards are attained by adhering to norms, while punishments occur for violating norms; on the other hand, internally implies rewards or punishments internal to the customer. Particularly, this research focuses on how norms can influence behavior internally. As norms become internalized, violating a norm makes an individual feel uncomfortable and/or ashamed. Therefore, individuals adhering to norms typically feel comfortable and as though they have done the right thing (Trawick et al. 1991). As a result of a customer feeling uncomfortable due to violating a norm, it is likely that he/she feels inferior to the service provider. In this case, the customer perceives as if he/she has done something wrong and that he/she is not up to par with the service provider. As previously described, according to the threat to self-esteem theory, a feeling of inferiority typically yields the customer to attribute the helping situation as threatening, thus producing negative reactions. As a result, I propose:

H₆: Consumer norm violations negatively impact a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

Mutual Intentions

Mutual intent is conceptualized as helping behavior that is motivated by mutual gain. This conceptualization is similar to the definition of mutualistic benevolence offered by Lee et al. (2004). A service provider with mutual intent helps not only to help the customer, but also to help him/herself. As a result of a perceiving a service provider as having mutual intentions, a customer may feel inclined to act in a certain way although he/she may not necessarily desire to do so. According to the threat to self-esteem model, help that restricts a recipients' future behavior or makes the recipient feel as though he/she must act in a certain way can be considered threatening. As noted before, help attributed as threatening motivates negative recipient reactions. Thus, the following hypothesis is presented:

H₇: Mutual intent negatively impacts a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

Mediating Effects

The two proposed models (See Figures 12 and 13) can be explained by two prototypes (Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi 2011), gratitude and indebtedness. Gratitude and indebtedness are

two possible but different reactions that can occur from receiving help. Most notably gratitude and indebtedness differ in valence, such that experiencing gratitude is positive whereas experiencing indebtedness is a mixed to negative reaction. The following section will further explain the concepts of gratitude and indebtedness and their roles as mediators in the conceptual models.

Gratitude

Gratitude is a positive reaction to receiving help. Gratitude has been defined by Fredrickson (2004, p.150) as “the emotion that arises when an individual (beneficiary) perceives that another person (benefactor) or source (e.g. God, luck, fate) has intentionally acted to improve the beneficiary’s well-being” and has been found to be positively related to affective commitment (Raggio and Folse 2009), purchase intentions, trust (Palmatier et al. 2009), and prosocial behavior (Watkins et al. 2006). According to the threat to self-esteem model (Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983), help is viewed as supportive when the recipient feels appreciated and cared for (Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010), and supportive help leads to favorable recipient reactions. As described, customization, extra-role behavior, and benevolent intentions can be classified as supportive, and are expected to have positive effects on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and preferential treatment. However, since help is deemed as supportive when a customer feels appreciated and cared for (Kassin, Fein, and Markus 2010), customer felt gratitude should arise in these supportive helping conditions, and explain the effects of customization, extra-role behavior, and benevolent intentions on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and preferential treatment. Therefore, the following hypotheses are presented:

H₈: Customer felt gratitude mediates the effects of customization on a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

H₉: Customer felt gratitude mediates the effects of extra-role behavior on a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

H₁₀: Customer felt gratitude mediates the effects of benevolent intentions on a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

Indebtedness

Indebtedness has been conceptualized as “an emotional state of arousal and discomfort” (Greenberg 1980, p. 4) and “as the state of obligation to repay another.” Indebtedness has been claimed to have motivational properties, such that one tries to reduce his/her feeling of indebtedness. As a result of indebtedness being characterized as uncomfortable, it is expected that a recipient feels indebted when he/she perceives him/herself as inferior or overly dependent to the helper. Therefore, it is expected that indebtedness occurs when helping situations are attributed as threatening, such as when the service provider engages in excessive customization or extra-role behavior, or the service provider is perceived as having mutual intentions or when the customer perceives he/she has violated a norm. In turn, the feeling of indebtedness is expected to cause negative customer reactions. Therefore, just as gratitude is predicted to function as a mediator, I now predict that indebtedness will also function as a mediator. Specifically, I propose:

H₁₁: Customer felt indebtedness mediates the effects of too much customization on a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

H₁₂: Customer felt indebtedness mediates the effects of too much extra-role behavior on a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

H₁₃: Customer felt indebtedness mediates the effects of mutual intentions on a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

H₁₄: Customer felt indebtedness mediates the effects of consumer norm violations on a) customer loyalty, b) positive word-of-mouth, and c) preferential treatment.

Moderating Effects

Relationship Quality

Relationship quality is considered the “caliber of relational ties with an exchange partner” (Palmatier 2008a, p. 77). Relationship quality is often considered a higher order construct; although first-order dimensions of the construct may vary across researchers, common dimensions include trust, commitment, reciprocity norms, and exchange efficiency (Palmatier 2008b; Palmatier 2008a; Palmatier et al. 2009). The current research conceptualizes each dimension as consistent with Palmatier et al. (2008a). Particularly, trust refers to an exchange parties’ assessment of the service provider’s reliability and integrity, such that exchange parties can foresee the other parties’ future actions as cooperative; commitment refers to the exchange parties’ desire to continue the relationship with the service provider; reciprocity norms refer to exchange parties’ expectations of reciprocity or obligations in the exchange; and exchange efficiency refers to evaluating the amount of time, effort, and resources in continuing a relationship. High quality relationships are characterized by a high degree of each of these four dimensions. It is expected that in high quality relationships, customers can more fully understand the service provider’s intentions and behaviors. For instance, norms are established in high quality relationships, therefore what is considered “too-much” may differ based on the quality of the relationship. A service provider engaging in extensive help may be perceived as “too much” and make the customer uncomfortable if he/she is a new customer; however the same behavior may be considered appropriate for a continued customer if the behavior is typical of the service provider. Thus, the effects of the antecedents discussed (See Figures 12 and 13) on gratitude and indebtedness may vary by relationship quality. In addition, the effects of gratitude and indebtedness on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, preferential treatment may also vary by relationship quality. For instance, a grateful customer may want to show their appreciation more for a service provider to whom they have a high quality relationship with, than for a service provider to whom they have a low quality relationship with. Therefore, the effect of gratitude on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment may be stronger in high quality relationships rather than low quality relationships. Similarly, the effect of indebtedness on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment may also vary by relationship quality. An indebted customer may be apt to give a service provider the benefit of the doubt if they have a high quality relationship the provider. Therefore, indebtedness may have a less harmful impact on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment in high quality relationships compared to low quality relationships. Thus, it is expected that:

H₁₅: Relationship quality moderates the effects of a) customization, b) extra-role behavior, and c) benevolent intentions on gratitude, and the effect of gratitude on d) customer loyalty, e) positive word-of mouth, and f) preferential treatment.

H₁₆: Relationship quality moderates the effects of a) too much customization, b) too much extra-role behavior, c) consumer norm violation, and d) mutual intentions on indebtedness, and the effect of indebtedness on e) customer loyalty, f) positive word-of mouth, and g) preferential treatment.

Personality Traits

This research also examines the potential moderating roles of trait gratitude, neuroticism and agreeableness. The traits discussed in this research refer to individual differences that are more persistent in nature than transient emotions.

Gratitude

Trait gratitude refers to the extent to which an individual possesses “a generalized tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotion to the roles of other people’s benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains” (McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang 2002, p. 112). Research suggests that individuals high rather than low in trait gratitude are more prone to experiencing state gratitude (i.e. the gratitude emotion) (McCullough, Tsang and Emmons 2004; Wood et al. 2008). Wood et al. (2008) offer an explanation to this effect. Particularly, they demonstrate that individuals high in trait gratitude make more positive benefit appraisals, such as perceiving help as more valuable, costly to provide and altruistically acted than those low in trait gratitude (Wood et al. 2008). Therefore, the effect of the antecedents on gratitude (see Figure 12) may be stronger for customers high in trait gratitude rather than low in trait gratitude. Likewise, the effect of the antecedents on indebtedness (see Figure 13) may be weaker for customers high in trait gratitude rather than low in trait gratitude. In addition, the effects of gratitude and indebtedness on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment may vary by trait gratitude. Thus,

H₁₇: Trait gratitude moderates the effects of a) customization, b) extra-role behavior, and c) benevolent intentions on gratitude, and the effect of gratitude on d) customer loyalty, e) positive word-of mouth, and f) preferential treatment.

H₁₈: Trait gratitude moderates the effects of a) too much customization, b) too much extra-role behavior, c) consumer norm violation, and d) mutual intentions on indebtedness, and the effect of indebtedness on e) customer loyalty, f) positive word-of mouth, and g) preferential treatment.

Neuroticism

Neuroticism refers to “the degree to which an individual is insecure, anxious, depressed, and emotional versus calm, self-confidence and cool,” (Cascio and Aguinis 2011, p. 212). Compared to the average, highly neurotic individuals are prone to experiencing negative emotions. Customers high in neuroticism may be less prone to experiencing gratitude but more

prone to experiencing indebtedness. Therefore, the effects of customization, extra-role behavior and benevolent intentions on gratitude may be weaker for highly neurotic customers; and the effects of too much customization and extra role behavior, consumer norm violation and mutual intentions on indebtedness may be stronger for highly neurotic customers. In addition, the effects of gratitude and indebtedness on loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment may differ by a customer's level of neuroticism. Thus,

H₁₉: Neuroticism moderates the effects of a) customization, b) extra-role behavior, and c) benevolent intentions on gratitude, and the effect of gratitude on d) customer loyalty, e) positive word-of mouth, and f) preferential treatment.

H₂₀: Neuroticism moderates the effects of a) too much customization, b) too much extra-role behavior, c) consumer norm violation, and d) mutual intentions on indebtedness, and the effect of indebtedness on e) customer loyalty, f) positive word-of mouth, and g) preferential treatment.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness refers to “the degree to which an individual is cooperative, warm, and agreeable versus cold, disagreeable, and antagonistic,” (Cascio and Aguinis 2011, p. 212). Highly agreeable individuals tend to have positive interpersonal interactions (Mount, Barrick, and Stewart 1998) and believe that individuals are honest and trustworthy. Given their positive interpersonal relationships and optimistic view of individuals, customers scoring high on agreeableness may be more prone to experiencing gratitude and less prone to experiencing indebtedness, such that the effects of the antecedents on gratitude (indebtedness) may be stronger (weaker) for highly agreeable customers. In addition, the effects of gratitude and indebtedness on loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment may vary by trait agreeableness. Therefore,

H₂₁: Agreeableness moderates the effects of a) customization, b) extra-role behavior, and c) benevolent intentions on gratitude, and the effect of gratitude on d) customer loyalty, e) positive word-of mouth, and f) preferential treatment.

H₂₂: Agreeableness moderates the effects of a) too much customization, b) too much extra-role behavior, c) consumer norm violation, and d) mutual intentions on indebtedness, and the effect of indebtedness on e) customer loyalty, f) positive word-of mouth, and g) preferential treatment.

METHODOLOGY

Two studies were conducted to address the hypotheses and relationships depicted in Figures 12 and 13. The two studies discussed in this Essay are extensions of Studies 3 and 4 in Essay Two. Specifically, Essay Three Study 1 utilizes the same sample as Essay 2 Study 3 and Essay Three Study 2 utilizes the same sample as Essay 2 Study 4.

Study 1 was conducted to assess the 1) measurement of the constructs and 2) structural paths of the gratitude model (See Figure 12); and to assess the 3) measurement of the constructs

and 4) structural paths of the indebtedness model (See Figure 13). Moreover, Study 1 was exploratory in nature and functioned as a pretest for Study 2.

Study 2 was an extension of Study 1 and was performed to further examine the 1) measurement properties, 2) direct effects, 3) mediating effects, and 4) moderating effects of the gratitude and indebtedness models presented in Figures 12 and 13, and 5) to identify that gratitude (indebtedness) rather than indebtedness (gratitude) best represented the mediating construct in Figure 12 (Figure 13).

Study 1

Study 1 was performed to address the following four issues: (Issue 1) examine the measurement properties and validity of the overall gratitude model, (Issue 2) assess the significance of the structural paths, including the antecedents and outcomes of gratitude, (Issue 3) examine the measurement properties and validity of the overall indebtedness model, and (Issue 4) assess the significance of the structural paths, including the antecedents and outcomes of indebtedness.

Sample, Procedures and Measures

All procedures were previously presented in Essay Two Study 3. Please refer to page fifty-eight for details.

Results

The results were analyzed using structural equation modeling and followed a two-step process advocated in the literature (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Hair et al. 1998). All of the measurement models in this study will be assessed through a set of criteria relating to model validity as well as convergent, construct and nomological validity of individual constructs. When assessing model validity, researchers generally consider at least three measures of overall model fit – absolute model fit measured by the χ^2 value, degrees of freedom and associated significance levels, a relative fit measure (CFI) and the RMSEA measure which is a scaled absolute fit measure. While the χ^2 value is the only truly “statistical” measure for which a significance level can be determined, its value as a measure of model fit is compromised by a number of study characteristics (i.e., model complexity and sample size) such that its value as a statistical assessment of model fit is limited (Hair et al. 1998). As a result, a number of alternative measures have been suggested. It is recommended that the CFI measure have values greater than .90 (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003) or even greater than .95 (Hu and Bentler 1999), while RMSEA values should be below .08 (Browne and Cudeck 1993) or .06 (Hu and Bentler 1999). Therefore, model validity was assessed according to these recommendations, and the subsequent results will report a χ^2 value, degrees of freedom, associated significance levels, CFI and RMSEA measures for each model.

Convergent, construct and nomological validity of individual constructs were tested according to the following criteria. When assessing convergent validity, indicator loadings on their hypothesized constructs should be statistically significant and greater than .70 (Hair et al.

1998). Construct validity was assessed primarily through composite reliability and average variance extracted measures for each construct, which should be above the recommended criteria of .70 and .50, respectively (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hair et al. 1998; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, nomological validity was assessed by examining the statistical significance of relationships among hypothesized constructs and the discriminant validity among all constructs. Hypothesized relationships should exhibit significant correlations, although the final assessment of relationships will occur in structural model testing. To assess discriminant validity, the average variance extracted was compared to squared correlations among constructs, with discriminant validity support if the squared correlation was greater than the average variance extracted values (Fornell and Larcker 1981). If a threat to discriminant validity was found through this test, an additional assessment was made by constraining the correlation between these two constructs to one, re-estimating the model and employing a χ^2 difference test. If the constrained relationship resulted in a significantly worse fitting model (i.e., the $\Delta\chi^2$ was statistically significant), then discriminant validity is supported (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). These two tests of discriminant validity were used in conjunction as needed for each of the following models.

After establishing sound measurement properties, structural models were estimated to examine the research hypotheses. Validity of the structural models was assessed by examining the standardized coefficients and their significance (Hair et al. 1998).

The following section will first describe the results for gratitude and then describe the results for indebtedness.

Gratitude Results

The following paragraphs will describe the analyses that were performed to examine the (Issue 1) measurement and (Issue 2) structural properties of the gratitude model presented in Figure 12.

Issue 1: Gratitude Measurement Model

First, a measurement model was estimated to assess the measurement properties of the overall gratitude model, which comprised of examining convergent, nomological and discriminant validity. This analysis included the following constructs: gratitude, benevolent intentions, extra-role behavior, customization, positive word-of-mouth, preferential treatment, purchase intentions and satisfaction. Purchase intent was removed from the analysis because it was a threat to discriminant validity by being highly correlated with preferential treatment. After removing purchase intentions, another model was estimated and the results indicated adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 1206.46$ (678), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). In support of convergent and construct validity, all items significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to their corresponding constructs (See Table 32), average variance extracted and reliability estimates for each construct were greater than .50 and .70, respectively. In support of nomological validity, all constructs were significantly ($p < .001$) correlated (See Appendix P). Since high correlations existed between gratitude and benevolent intentions, gratitude and customization, and gratitude and positive word-of-mouth, a χ^2 difference test was

conducted (See Tables 33 and 34). The results indicated significantly worse fit for all relationships except for the relationship between gratitude and benevolent intentions (See Table 34). Thus, these results offer evidence of discriminant validity, although the subsequent results regarding gratitude and benevolent intentions should be interpreted cautiously.

Table 32: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Gratitude Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loadings
Factor: Benevolent Intentions³⁷	AVE = .66; CR = .85
The mechanic “was concerned with my welfare”	.80
The mechanic’s “concern is truly genuine”	.79
The mechanic was looking out for my best interests (added)	.84
Factor: Customization³⁸	AVE = .75; CR = .94
The mechanic “was flexible in response to my requests”	.84
The mechanic “modified his service based on my needs”	.83
The mechanic “was willing to accommodate an unexpected situation”	.90
The mechanic “was flexible in dealing with me”	.92
The mechanic “made adjustments to cope with changing circumstances”	.85
Factor: Extra-Role Behavior³⁹	AVE = .52; CR = .81
The mechanic appropriately “went above and beyond the call of duty”	.68
The mechanic performed extra behaviors that were suitable to his role	.75
The mechanic “I dealt with” engaged in extra behaviors that were fitting to his job	.78
The mechanic “went out of his way” just the right amount	.68
Factor: Gratitude Affect	AVE = .61; CR = .88
I am valued	.80
I am supported	.81
I feel special	.76
I feel treasured	.73
I feel respected	.79
Factor: Gratitude Behavior	AVE = .71; CR = .94
I want to do something to improve the other person’s well-being.	.81
I want to help the other person out.	.85
I want to do something for the other person's benefit.	.88
I want to do something to benefit the other person.	.82
I want to return the favor.	.80
I want to do something for the other party’s sake.	.89
Factor: Gratitude Cognition	AVE = .68; CR = .93
I think the other person is a good person	.82
The other person is genuine	.84
The other person is caring	.80
I think the other person is honest	.80
I think the other person is respectful	.87
I think the other person is thoughtful	.82
Factor: Preferential Treatment⁴⁰	AVE = .89; CR = .97
“I would consider this store as my first choice for automotive services.”	.94

³⁷ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004

³⁸ Items adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997; Lusch and Brown 1996; Pounders 2010

³⁹ Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003

⁴⁰ Items adapted from Harris and Goode 2004; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996

Table 32 continued

"In the future, if I were to need automotive services, I would contact this store first."	.97
"I would favor the offerings of this automotive repair store before others."	.92
"I would choose to use this repair store in preference to competitor firms."	.95
Factor: Satisfaction⁴¹	AVE= .74; CR = .90
"I am very dissatisfied/I am very satisfied."	.81
"This service falls short of my expectations/This service exceeds my expectations."	.89
"The mechanic is not very close to the ideal service provider/The mechanic is very close to the ideal service provider."	.88
Factor: Positive Word-of-Mouth⁴²	AVE = .88; CR = .96
"I would "talk-up" this automotive repair store to people I know."	.90
"I would bring up this automotive repair store in a positive way in conversations I have with friends and acquaintances."	.97
"In social situations, I would speak favorably about this automotive repair store."	.95

Table 33: Tests of Discriminant Validity for Gratitude Measurement Model

	AVE	Gratitude	Benevolent Intentions	Customization	Extra Role Behavior	PT	PWOM
Affect	.60						
Behavior	.71						
Cognition	.68						
Gratitude	.52						
Benevolent Intentions	.66	.79					
Customization	.75	.60	.53				
Extra Role	.52	.35	.32	.27			
Preferential Treatment	.89	.56	.38	.37	.18		
PWOM	.88	.63	.45	.50	.23	.58	
Satisfaction	.74	.35	.24	.32	.15	.33	.37

Table 34: Further Tests of Discriminant Validity for Gratitude Measurement Model

Correlation Specified as One	$\Delta \chi^2$
Gratitude and Benevolent Intentions	3.6
Gratitude and Customization	13.14
Gratitude and Positive Word-of-Mouth	4.74

Issue 2: Gratitude Structural Model

A structural model was then estimated to assess the structural paths presented in Figure 12. The structural model specified benevolent intentions, customization and extra role behavior

⁴¹ Items adapted from Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos 2005

⁴² Items adapted from Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003

as exogenous constructs; positive word-of-mouth, satisfaction and preferential treatment as endogenous constructs; and gratitude as the endogenous, mediating construct (See Figure 12). The results indicated adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 1245.40$ (690), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .93, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). The results offered evidence in support of Figure 12, such that gratitude was caused by benevolent intentions (standardized path estimate = .462, $p < .001$) and customization (standardized path estimate = .407, $p < .001$); however, extra-role behavior had no effect on gratitude (standardized path estimate = .101, $p > .05$). In addition, gratitude had a significant effect on positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = .871, $p < .001$), satisfaction (standardized path estimate = .666, $p < .001$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = .811, $p < .001$). These results offer evidence to support the main study.

As a result of a potential threat to discriminant validity between gratitude and benevolent intentions (as identified in Issue 1), benevolent intentions was removed from the above model and the model was re-estimated. The results indicated decent fit ($\chi^2 = 1064.97$ (585), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). More importantly, all path estimates remained significant and in the predicted direction, and extra-role behavior did have a significant effect on gratitude (standardized path estimate = .215, $p < .01$). These results demonstrate that extra-role behavior becomes a significant antecedent to gratitude after removing benevolent intentions.

Likewise, since Issue 1 also indicated a potential threat to discriminant validity between gratitude and customization, the model was re-estimated after removing customization. The estimated model consisted of extra-role behavior, gratitude, preferential treatment, positive word-of-mouth and satisfaction. The results indicated good fit ($\chi^2 = 796.28$ (427), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). The results further revealed that all path estimates remained significant and in the predicted direction.

Lastly, since Issue 1 revealed another potential threat to discriminant validity between gratitude and positive word-of-mouth, positive word-of-mouth was removed from the model and the model was re-estimated. The estimated model included extra-role behavior, gratitude, preferential treatment and satisfaction. The results suggested good fit ($\chi^2 = 615.03$ (344), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). Importantly, all path estimates remained significant and in the predicted direction. Together, these results indicate that the predicted model holds even after removing constructs that were considered to be a potential threat to discriminant validity in Issue 1.

Indebtedness Results

The following paragraphs will describe the analyses that were performed to examine the (Issue 3) measurement and (Issue 4) structural properties of the indebtedness model presented in Figure 13. As performed to interpret the results for gratitude, a two-step process was followed to analyze the indebtedness results (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Hair et al. 1998). Furthermore, the subsequent models were assessed according to the criteria described on pages ninety-eight through ninety-nine.

Issue 3: Indebtedness Measurement Model

First, a measurement model was estimated to assess the measurement properties of the overall indebtedness model, which comprised of examining convergent, nomological and discriminant validity. This analysis included the following constructs: the indebtedness dimensions, mutual intentions, excessive extra role behavior, consumer norm violation, positive word-of-mouth, satisfaction and preferential treatment. The results suggested adequate fit adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 1118.44$ (695), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). In support of convergent and construct validity, all items significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to their corresponding constructs (See Table 35); average variance extracted and reliability estimates for each construct were above the recommended criteria of .50 and .70, respectively.

Except for indebtedness behavior and duration, all indebtedness dimensions were significantly correlated ($p < .05$); however, their correlations were not high enough to warrant a second-order indebtedness model (See Table 21). Furthermore, several but not all constructs were significantly ($p < .001$) correlated (See Appendix Q). Noteworthy non-significant correlations included mutual intentions and the indebtedness dimensions and indebtedness dimensions and the dependent measures (i.e. satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment). Indebtedness affect was the only dimension to significantly ($p < .01$) correlate with all of the dependent measures. No threats to discriminant validity were detected (See Table 36).

Table 35: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Indebtedness Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loadings
Factor: Mutual Intentions⁴³	AVE = .65; CR = .85
The mechanic “helped because it was mutually beneficial for him and me”	.80
The mechanic “offered support because he thought it would be beneficial for both parties”	.80
The mechanic “helped because he gained as well as me”	.82
Factor: Customer Norm Violation	AVE = .68; CR = .86
I feel like I didn’t fulfill my role	.78
I feel as if I might have done something wrong	.84
I feel as though I violated an expectation	.85
Factor: Excessive Extra Role Behavior⁴⁴	AVE = .58; CR = .80
The mechanic inappropriately “went above and beyond the call of duty”	.86
The mechanic “I dealt with” engaged in behaviors that were inappropriate to his job	.70
The mechanic “went out of his way” too much	.71
Factor: Indebtedness Affect	AVE = .57; CR = .89
Constrained	.84
I feel like something is hanging over my head	.71
Tense	.64

⁴³ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004

⁴⁴ Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003

Table 35 continued

Bothered	.72
Trapped	.83
I feel like my hands are tied	.77
Factor: Indebtedness Behavior	AVE = .53; CR = .82
My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit me.	.62
My goal is to improve my well-being.	.67
I want my actions to benefit me.	.81
I want to do something for my sake.	.80
Factor: Indebtedness Cognition	AVE = .60; CR = .88
I am thinking about resolving the position I am in.	.74
I am thinking about handling my relationship with the other party.	.86
I am thinking about settling my relationship with the other party.	.61
I am thinking about clearing up my relationship with the other party	.82
I owe the other person	.83
Factor: Indebtedness Duration	AVE = .68; CR = .93
Doing something for the other person would immediately rid this feeling.	.85
After I return the favor, I will no longer feel this way.	.80
I'll feel differently the sooner I do something for the other person.	.83
Once I do something to repay the other party, I won't feel this way anymore.	.85
This feeling will go away after I reciprocate.	.73
This emotion will disappear after I do something for the other person.	.87
Factor: Preferential Treatment⁴⁵	AVE = .89; CR = .93
"I would consider this store as my first choice for automotive services."	.94
"In the future, if I were to need automotive services, I would contact this store first."	.97
"I would favor the offerings of this automotive repair store before others."	.92
"I would choose to use this repair store in preference to competitor firms."	.95
Factor: Satisfaction⁴⁶	AVE = .74; CR = .90
"I am very dissatisfied/I am very satisfied."	.80
"This service falls short of my expectations/This service exceeds my expectations."	.90
"The mechanic is not very close to the ideal service provider/The mechanic is very close to the ideal service provider."	.88
Factor: Positive Word-of-Mouth⁴⁷	AVE = .88; CR = .96
"I would "talk-up" this automotive repair store to people I know."	.91
"I would bring up this automotive repair store in a positive way in conversations I have with friends and acquaintances."	.97
"In social situations, I would speak favorably about this automotive repair store."	.94

Table 36: Tests of Discriminant Validity for Indebtedness Measurement Model

Construct	AVE	IA	IB	IC	ID	E.E.R.	CNV	M.I.	SAT	PWOM
IA	.57									
IB	.53	.03								
IC	.60	.07	.04							
ID	.68	.05	.00	.09						
E.E.R.	.58	.22	.02	.09	.04					
CNV	.68	.20	.03	.26	.08	.42				
M.I.	.65	.00	.02	.00	.002	.03	.00			
SAT	.74	.05	.00	.03	.00	.10	.01	.03		

⁴⁵ Items adapted from Harris and Goode 2004; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996⁴⁶ Items adapted from Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos 2005⁴⁷ Items adapted from Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003

Table 36 continued

PWOM	.88	.15	.02	.00	.00	.13	.06	.05	.37	
P.T.	.89	.12	.04	.00	.00	.09	.02	.04	.33	.58

Issue 4: Indebtedness Structural Model

Next, a structural model was estimated to examine the structural paths presented in Figure 13. The structural model included excessive extra-role behavior, consumer norm violation and mutual intention as exogenous constructs, satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment as endogenous constructs, and the indebtedness dimensions as endogenous, mediating constructs. The results suggested decent but not good fit ($\chi^2 = 1374.85$ (713), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .90, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). The results demonstrated that indebtedness duration had no effect on the dependent measures; excessive extra-role behavior had no effect on indebtedness behavior, cognition or duration; mutual intentions had no effect on indebtedness affect or duration; consumer norm violation had no effect on indebtedness behavior; and indebtedness behavior had no effect on satisfaction. However, the results did indicate that consumer norm violations influenced indebtedness affect, behavior and cognition; excessive extra-role behavior impacted indebtedness affect; mutual intentions influenced indebtedness behavior and cognition; indebtedness affect and cognition impacted all three dependent measures; and that indebtedness behavior influenced positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment (See Appendix R for standardized path estimates). These results provide partial support in conducting the main study.

Summary of Study 1 Results

Study 1 was conducted to address four primary issues. The results provide evidence that (Issue 1) the constructs presented in Figure 12 have strong measurement properties and that (Issue 2) the structural paths presented in Figure 12 are significant. Specifically, customer felt gratitude is elicited by benevolent intentions of a service provider and by customizing service to a customer's unique needs. The results also provide partial support for extra-role behavior as an antecedent to gratitude, since the path from extra-role behavior to gratitude became significant after removing benevolent intentions from the model. The results offer further evidence that customer felt gratitude leads to favorable outcomes, including enhanced satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment. Moreover, (Issue 3) the measurement properties for the indebtedness model were not as strong as the gratitude model. Due to lack of support for a second-order model of indebtedness, the indebtedness results could not be interpreted as clearly as gratitude. The results revealed that (Issue 4) each antecedent impacted some but not all of the dimensions of indebtedness; likewise, indebtedness affect and cognition were the only dimensions to negatively affect all outcome constructs. Therefore, the results provide partial evidence that indebtedness is elicited by excessive extra-role behavior, mutual intentions and consumer norm violations, and that customer felt indebtedness negatively impacts satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment.

Study 2

Study 2 was performed to address the following ten issues: to examine the (Issue 1) measurement properties, (Issue 2) direct effects, (Issue 3) mediating effects, and (Issue 4)

moderating effects, and (Issue 5) to verify that gratitude functioned as the best mediating construct in the gratitude model presented in Figure 12; and to examine the (Issue 6) measurement properties, (Issue 7) direct effects, (Issue 8) mediating effects, and (Issue 9) moderating effects, and (Issue 10) to verify that indebtedness functioned as the best mediating construct in the indebtedness model presented in Figure 13.

Sample, Procedures and Measures

Please refer to page sixty-nine in Essay Two Study 4 for details regarding the sample and procedures of this study.

Results

To examine Issues 1-10, a series of measurement and structural equation models were estimated. The models were assessed according to the recommendations outlined on pages ninety-eight through ninety-nine, in addition to the subsequent criteria.

To test for mediation, the models presented in Figures 12 and 13 were separated to include one antecedent, the predicted mediating construct (i.e. gratitude or indebtedness) and outcome constructs. In testing for mediation, the procedures advocated by (Zhao, Lynch Jr., and Chen 2010) were adhered to. In following these procedures, it is critical to first examine the significance of the indirect effect, then examine the significance of the direct effect, and lastly examine the directions of indirect and direct effect. A key difference in these procedures is that the independent construct (i.e. antecedent) does not need to have a significant direct effect on the dependent construct. Instead, the effect can operate through the mediator. Zhao, Lynch Jr., and Chen (2010) also present a typology of mediations and non-mediations, which includes the following four classifications: complementary, competitive, in-direct only and direct only. Complementary mediation occurs when the direct effect (i.e. the effect of the independent construct on the dependent construct) is significant, while the indirect effect (i.e. the effect through the mediator) is also significant. Complementary mediation is often referred to as partial mediation. Competitive mediation occurs when the direct and indirect effects are significant, similar to complementary mediation, however in competitive mediation, the direct and indirect effects are of opposing directions. Therefore, competitive mediation reveals that other mediating constructs may need to be identified. In-direct only occurs when the direct effect is non-significant, while the indirect effect is significant. This type of mediation typically is referred to as full mediation. Lastly, direct only is a case of no mediation. Simply the direct effect is significant, while the indirect effect is non-significant. The subsequent analyses followed this typology, and more information is presented in Appendix S.

Moderation was assessed through multi-group analyses. First, composite scores were created by averaging participants' responses to the relationship quality, trait gratitude, agreeableness and neuroticism items. Then, median splits were performed to divide the data into two groups for each construct (i.e. high versus low: relationship quality, trait gratitude, agreeableness and neuroticism). Next, a group comparison of the overall models depicted in Figures 12 and 13 was performed. Then metric and structural invariance was assessed. If metric and structural invariance was attained, no moderation occurred (Netemeyer, Bearden, and

Sharma 2003). However, if structural invariance was not attained, then pairwise tests of coefficients were performed to identify the structural paths that differed.

Evidence supporting or not supporting the hypotheses will be described throughout this section and can be found in Table 37, Table 41 and Table 44. This section will first describe the results for the gratitude model and then discuss the results for the indebtedness model.

Table 37: Hypotheses Results for Direct Effects

Direct Effects		Supported
H1a	Customization on loyalty	√ ⁴⁸
H1b	Customization on PWOM	√
H1c	Customization on preferential treatment	√
H2a	Extra-role behavior on loyalty	
H2b	Extra-role behavior on PWOM	√
H2c	Extra-role behavior on preferential treatment	
H3a	Benevolent intentions on loyalty	√
H3b	Benevolent intentions on PWOM	
H3c	Benevolent intentions on preferential treatment	
H4a	Excessive customization on loyalty	
H4b	Excessive customization on PWOM	
H4c	Excessive customization on preferential treatment	
H5a	Excessive extra-role behavior on loyalty	
H5b	Excessive extra-role behavior on PWOM	
H5c	Excessive customization on preferential treatment	
H6a	Consumer norm violation on loyalty	
H6b	Consumer norm violation on PWOM	√
H6c	Consumer norm violation on preferential treatment	√
H7a	Mutual intentions on loyalty	√*
H7b	Mutual intentions on PWOM	
H7c	Mutual intentions on preferential treatment	

Gratitude Results

Table 38: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Gratitude Measurement Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loadings
Factor: Benevolent Intentions⁴⁹	AVE = .62; CR = .83
“The front line employee was concerned with my welfare”	.77
“The front line employee’s concern is truly genuine”	.85
The front line employee was looking out for my best interests (added)	.74
Factor: Customization⁵⁰	AVE = .64; CR = .88
“was flexible in response to my requests”	.79

⁴⁸ √ = hypothesis supported; √* = competitive mediation

⁴⁹ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004

⁵⁰ Items adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997; Lusch and Brown 1996; Pounders 2010

Table 38 continued

“modified his service based on my needs”	.77
“was willing to accommodate an unexpected situation”	.73
“was flexible in dealing with me”	.91
Factor: Extra-Role Behavior⁵¹	AVE = .57; CR = .80
“Willingly went out of his/her way to make me satisfied”	.80
“Voluntarily assisted me even if it meant going beyond his/her job requirements”	.72
“Went above and beyond the call of duty in servicing me”	.75
Factor: Gratitude Affect	AVE = .54; CR = .78
I am valued	.77
I am special	.68
I am respected	.75
Factor: Gratitude Behavior	AVE = .75; CR = .95
I want to do something to improve the front line employee’s well-being.	.89
I want to help the front line employee out.	.93
I want to do something for the front line employee's benefit.	.86
I want to do something to benefit the front line employee.	.79
I want to return the favor.	.88
I want to do something for the front line employee’s sake.	.84
Factor: Gratitude Cognition	AVE = .77; CR = .95
I think the front line employee is a good person	.86
The front line employee is genuine	.91
The front line employee is caring	.88
I think the front line employee is honest	.90
I think the front line employee is respectful	.85
I think the front line employee is thoughtful	.88
Factor: Loyalty⁵²	AVE = .85; CR = .92
“I feel a sense of loyalty to this store.”	.92
“I feel like a committed shopper at this store.”	.92
Factor: Positive Word-of-Mouth⁵³	AVE = .81; CR = .95
“I would “talk-up” this front line employee to people I know.”	.81
“I would bring up this experience in a positive way in conversations I have with friends and acquaintances.”	.89
“In social situations, I would speak favorably about this front line employee.”	.94
“I would recommend this front line employee to others”	.96
Factor: Preferential Treatment⁵⁴	AVE = .86; CR = .96
“When considering this type of product/service, I would consider this company as my first choice.”	.91
“In the future, if I were to need this product/service, I would contact this store first.”	.93
“I would favor the offerings of this company before others.”	.94
“I would choose to use this company in preference to competitor firms.”	.92

Table 39: Tests of Discriminant Validity for Gratitude Measurement Model in Study 2

	AVE	Gratitude	Customization	Extra Role Behavior	Benevolent Intentions	Loyalty	Word-of-Mouth
Affect	0.54						

⁵¹ Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003⁵² Items adapted from Hess 1998; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004⁵³ Items adapted from Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003⁵⁴ Items adapted from Harris and Goode 2004; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996

Table 39 continued

Behavior	0.75						
Cognition	0.77						
Gratitude	.59						
Customization	0.64	0.54					
Extra Role Behavior	0.57	0.59	0.45				
Benevolent Intentions	0.62	0.77	0.47	0.55			
Loyalty	0.85	0.32	0.24	0.22	0.39		
Word-of-Mouth	0.81	0.54	0.43	0.41	0.33	0.39	
Preferential Treatment	0.85	0.25	0.30	0.17	0.23	0.62	0.42

Table 40: Further Tests of Discriminant Validity for Gratitude Measurement Model in Study 2

Constrained Relationship	Chi-Square Difference Test Value
Extra role and gratitude to 1	13.22
Benevolent intentions and gratitude to 1	9.72

The following paragraphs will describe the analyses that were performed to examine Issues 1-5.

Issue 1: Gratitude Measurement Model

A measurement model was estimated to evaluate the measurement properties of the constructs presented in Figure 12, which set the foundation for addressing the subsequent issues. The results indicated acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 879.08$ (536), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). In support of convergent and construct validity, all items loaded significantly ($p < .001$) to their corresponding construct; average variance extracted and reliability estimates were above .50 and .70, respectively (See Table 38). There were two situations where the squared correlation was higher than the average variance extracted (See Table 39); in these instances, a chi-square difference test was performed (See Table 40). These analyses indicated significantly worse fit when constraining correlations to one, thus offering evidence of discriminant validity.

Issue 2: Examining Direct Effects—H1-H3

To assess the direct effects between the antecedents and outcomes presented in H1-H3, a structural model was estimated that included benevolent intentions, customization and extra role

behavior as exogenous constructs and loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment as endogenous constructs. Since the measurement model in Analysis 1 indicated that loyalty, preferential treatment and positive word-of-mouth were significantly related, structural paths from loyalty to positive word-of-mouth and from loyalty to preferential treatment were added to the model.⁵⁵ The results indicated good fit, ($\chi^2 = 281.29$ (156), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .98, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). In support of H1a-c, customization positively impacted loyalty (standardized path estimate = .183, $p < .05$), positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = .273, $p < .001$), and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = .290, $p < .001$). Support was found for H2b, such that extra-role behavior had a significant effect on positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = .206, $p < .05$), but extra-role behavior failed to effect ($p > .05$) loyalty or preferential treatment, therefore no support was found for H2a or H2c. The results supported H3a, such that benevolent intentions positively influenced loyalty (standardized path estimate = .448, $p < .001$), however benevolent intentions had no effect ($p > .05$) on positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment, therefore no support was provided for H3b and H3c.

Since Issue 1 indicated a potential threat to discriminant validity between gratitude and benevolent intentions and gratitude and extra-role behavior, benevolent intentions and extra-role behavior were removed from the model and the model was re-estimated. Therefore, the model consisted of extra-role behavior as an antecedent, and loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment as consequences. The results suggested good model fit ($\chi^2 = 159.36$ (72), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .98, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). Importantly, significant path estimates still held after removing these constructs. Specifically, customization continued to have significant effects on loyalty (standardized path estimate = .493, $p < .01$), positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = .457, $p < .01$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = .214, $p < .01$).

Issue 3: Examining Gratitude as Mediator—H8-H10

The next structural model examined gratitude as the mediating construct between customization, extra role behavior, and benevolent intentions on loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment (H8-H10; See Figure 12). The results indicated good fit ($\chi^2 = 928.97$ (546), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). In addition, all paths were significant and positive ($p > .05$). Customization (standardized path estimate = .265, $p < .001$), extra-role behavior (standardized path estimate = .201, $p < .01$) and benevolent intentions (standardized path estimate = .557, $p < .001$) had positive and significant effects on gratitude; and gratitude had positive and significant effects on loyalty (standardized path estimate = .256, $p < .001$), positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = .627, $p < .001$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = .140, $p < .01$).

Since previous findings indicated a potential threat to discriminant validity between benevolent intentions and gratitude, and extra-role behavior and gratitude, the model was re-estimated after removing benevolent intentions and extra-role behavior. Therefore, the model consisted of customization as the antecedent, gratitude as the mediator, and loyalty, positive

⁵⁵ As a result of the high correlations between loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment, these paths were added to all of the subsequent models; however these paths were not the focus of the research.

word-of-mouth and preferential treatment as the outcomes. The results suggested acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 928.97625.62$ (368), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). Importantly, customization continued to impact gratitude (standardized path estimate = .785, $p < .01$), and gratitude continued to impact loyalty (standardized path estimate = .608, $p < .01$), positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = .658, $p < .01$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = .196, $p < .01$). These results demonstrate that the model holds even after removing constructs that may be considered a potential threat to discriminant validity.

As previously described, the procedures advocated by Zhao, Lynch Jr., and Chen (2010) were adhered to when testing for mediation. A key difference in these procedures is that the independent construct (i.e. antecedent) does not need to have a significant direct effect on the dependent construct. Instead, the effect can operate through the mediator. More detail on the bootstrapping results including fit indices, path estimates, and indirect effects can be found in Appendix S. In support of H8a, the results indicated that gratitude fully mediated the effect of customization on loyalty; in addition, gratitude partially mediated the effects of customization on positive word-of-mouth (H8b) and preferential treatment (H8c). In support of H9a-c, the results also indicated that gratitude fully mediated the effect of extra role behavior on loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and preferential treatment. Positive word-of-mouth needed to be removed from the benevolent intentions model; therefore H10b could not be tested. The results failed to offer support for H10a, such that gratitude did not mediate the effect of benevolent intentions on loyalty. However, the results did offer support for H10c, such that gratitude fully mediated the effect of benevolent intentions on preferential treatment (See Table 41).

Table 41: Hypotheses Results for Indirect Effects: Gratitude

	Loyalty	Positive Word-of-Mouth	Preferential Treatment
Customization	F ⁵⁶	P	P
Extra Role Behavior	F	F	F
Benevolent Intentions	D	N/A	F

Issue 4: Examining Relationship Quality, Trait Gratitude, Neuroticism and Agreeableness as Moderators—H15, 17, 19 and 21

As described, relationship quality, trait gratitude, neuroticism and agreeableness were gathered as potential moderators. The measures and reliabilities of these constructs can be found in Table 42.

Table 42: Measures of Potential Moderating Constructs

	Reliability	Article Adapted From
Relationship Quality	.79	Palmatier 2008a
"I am willing to go the extra mile to work with this front line		

⁵⁶ D = Direct effect only; F = Full mediation; P = Partial Mediation; N = No effect; N/A = The indirect effect of gratitude on Word-of-Mouth could not be analyzed for the benevolent intentions model

Table 42 continued

employee.”		
“I view the relationship with this front line employee as a long-term partnership.”		
“I have trust in this front line employee.”		
“This front line employee is trustworthy.”		
“There is a norm of reciprocity guiding my relationship with this front line employee.”		
“We would help each other without expecting an immediate favor in return.”		
“My interactions with this front line employee are often inefficient. (Reverse coded)”		
“My dealings with this front line employee are very efficient.”		
Trait Gratitude	.76	McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang 2002
“I have so much in life to be thankful for.”		
“If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.”		
“When I look at the world, I don’t see much to be grateful for.”		
“I am grateful for a wide variety of people.”		
“As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.”		
“Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.”		
Agreeableness	.73	Brown et al. 2002
“I am someone who is...”		
“Tender hearted with others”		
“Sympathetic”		
“Kind to others”		
Neuroticism	.84	Brown et al. 2002
“I am someone who is...”		
“Moody more than others”		
“Temperamental”		
“Envious”		
“Emotions go way up and down”		
“Testy more than others”		

As described earlier, a multi-group analysis was conducted to examine the moderating role of relationship quality (H15). Specifically, a composite score was first created by averaging participants’ responses to the relationship quality items. Then a median split was created to separate participants into low relationship quality ($\bar{X}_{\text{low}} < 4.81$) and high relationship quality ($\bar{X}_{\text{high}} > 4.81$) groups. Therefore, two groups were created. After establishing partial metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.03, $p > .05$), the next step was to assess structural invariance. The results indicated that structural invariance was achieved ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.39, $p > .05$). Thus, no support was provided for H15.

The research also collected personality information, including measures of trait gratitude, agreeableness and neuroticism. For each personality construct, composite scores were created and then a median split was performed. Therefore two groups were created for each personality

construct. These groups were used in multi-group analyses, and demonstrated that the gratitude model did not differ by participant's level of trait gratitude, since metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 0.59, $p > .05$) and structural invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.00, $p > .05$) was achieved. Therefore no support for H17 was provided. Likewise, the gratitude model was not moderated by neuroticism, as metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 0.94, $p > .05$) and structural invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.03, $p = .05$) was attained. Thus, no support for H19 was offered. However, after achieving metric invariance for agreeableness ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.51, $p > .05$), it was noticed that structural invariance could not be attained ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.72, $p < .01$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that the effects of benevolent intentions ($z = 2.31$) and extra-role behavior ($z = 2.05$) on gratitude varied by trait agreeableness. Specifically, benevolent intentions had a stronger effect on gratitude for those with high agreeableness (standardized path estimate = .51, $p < .001$) than those with low agreeableness (standardized path estimate = .25, $p > .05$). Likewise, extra-role behavior had a stronger effect on gratitude for those with high agreeableness (standardized path estimate = .26, $p < .05$) than those with low agreeableness (standardized path estimate = -.05, $p > .05$). Thus, these results offer support for H21b and H21c, but no support for H21a, H21d, H21e, or H21f. Together, these results indicate that the gratitude model was not moderated by trait gratitude or neuroticism; but by agreeableness. Highly agreeable rather than low agreeable individuals were more prone to experiencing gratitude.

Issue 5: Verifying the Model Represents Gratitude

Lastly, to verify that the structural model presented in Figure 12 reflected gratitude and not indebtedness, the gratitude items were removed from the model and were replaced by indebtedness items. The results indicated adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 1009.605$ (687), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .04). However, when looking at the path estimates, indebtedness shared negative relationships with customization (standardized path estimate = -.358, $p < .001$), benevolent intentions (standardized path estimate = -.375, $p < .001$), loyalty (standardized path estimate = -.660, $p < .001$), positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = -.836, $p < .001$), and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = -.303, $p < .001$). Extra-role behavior had no effect on indebtedness (standardized path estimate = -.181, $p > .05$). In addition, the indebtedness cognition dimension (standardized path estimate = .078, $p > .05$) failed to significantly load on the indebtedness construct; likewise, the remaining second-order loadings to the higher order indebtedness concept were low: affect (standardized path estimate = .412, $p < .001$), behavior (standardized path estimate = .238, $p < .01$), and duration (standardized path estimate = .315, $p < .001$). These results offer evidence that gratitude is better represented in this model (See Figure 12) than indebtedness.

Indebtedness Results

The following paragraphs will describe the analyses that were performed to examine Issues 6-10. The analyses were held to the same criteria discussed on pages ninety-eight through ninety-nine and one hundred six through one hundred seven.

Table 43: Measurement Properties of Constructs Included in the Indebtedness Measurement Model

	Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Item Loading
Factor: Mutual Intentions⁵⁷	AVE = .68; CR = .87
“The front line employee helped because it was mutually beneficial for him/her and me”	.91
“The front line employee offered support because he/she thought it would be beneficial for both parties”	.79
“The front line employee helped because he/she gained as well as me”	.78
Factor: Excessive Customization⁵⁸	AVE = .66; CR = .89
Was too “flexible in response to my requests”	.90
Went overboard in accommodating me.	.72
Was too “flexible in dealing with me”	.75
Was so flexible that it was too outside the norm	.86
Factor: Excessive Extra-Role Behavior⁵⁹	AVE = .43; CR = .69
Inappropriately “went above and beyond the call of duty”	.62
“Went out of his/her way” too much in order to help me	.60
Engaged in behaviors that were too outside the norm	.73
Factor: Consumer Norm Violation	AVE = .74; CR = .92
I feel like I didn’t fulfill my role.	.76
I feel as if I might have done something wrong.	.86
I feel as though I violated an expectation.	.90
I feel as though I didn’t live up to my part.	.91
Factor: Indebtedness Affect	AVE = .64; CR = .91
Constrained	.78
I feel like something is hanging over my head	.78
Tense	.76
Bothered	.80
Trapped	.81
I feel like my hands are tied	.85
Factor: Indebtedness Behavior	AVE = .54; CR = .78
My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit me.	.76
I want my actions to benefit me.	.73
I want to do something for my sake.	.73
Factor: Indebtedness Cognition	AVE = .65; CR = .88
I am thinking about resolving the position I am in.	.77
I am thinking about handling my relationship with the other party.	.71
I am thinking about settling my relationship with the other party.	.89
I am thinking about clearing up my relationship with the other party	.84
Factor: Indebtedness Duration	AVE = .67; CR = .92
Doing something for the other person would immediately rid this feeling.	.88
After I return the favor, I will no longer feel this way.	.85
I’ll feel differently the sooner I do something for the other person.	.80

⁵⁷ Items adapted from Lee et al. 2004⁵⁸ Items adapted from Bello and Gilliland 1997; Lusch and Brown 1996; Pounders 2010⁵⁹ Items adapted from Maxham and Netemeyer 2003

Table 43 continued

Once I do something to repay the other party, I won't feel this way anymore.	.83
This feeling will go away after I reciprocate.	.74
This emotion will disappear after I do something for the other person.	.81
Factor: Loyalty⁶⁰	AVE = .85; CR = .92
"I feel a sense of loyalty to this store."	.92
"I feel like a committed shopper at this store."	.93
Factor: Positive Word-of-Mouth⁶¹	AVE = .81; CR = .95
"I would "talk-up" this front line employee to people I know."	.81
"I would bring up this experience in a positive way in conversations I have with friends and acquaintances."	.90
"In social situations, I would speak favorably about this front line employee."	.94
"I would recommend this front line employee to others"	.96
Factor: Preferential Treatment⁶²	AVE = .86; CR = .96
"When considering this type of product/service, I would consider this company as my first choice."	.91
"In the future, if I were to need this product/service, I would contact this store first."	.93
"I would favor the offerings of this company before others."	.94
"I would choose to use this company in preference to competitor firms."	.92

Similar to gratitude analyses, a measurement model was first estimated to assess the measurement properties of the constructs presented in Figure 13, which set the foundation for addressing the following issues. The estimated measurement model included the following constructs: indebtedness, consumer norm violation, excessive extra-role behavior, excessive customization, mutual intentions, customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and mutual intentions. The results indicated good fit ($\chi^2 = 1232.52$ (828), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .04). In support of convergent and construct validity, all items significantly ($p < .001$) loaded to their corresponding construct; composite reliabilities and average variance extracted for each construct adhered to the recommended estimates except for excessive extra-role behavior (See Table 43). Tests of discriminant validity indicated that the only threat was the correlation between excessive extra-role behavior and excessive customization (See Table 44). Therefore a χ^2 difference test was conducted which indicated no significant difference, $\Delta\chi^2 = 1.6$. Thus, these results fail to provide evidence that excessive customization is truly distinct from excessive extra-role behavior. As a result of failing to adhere to recommended criteria, including poor reliability, poor average variance extracted, and failing to pass tests of discriminant validity, excessive extra-role behavior was removed from the subsequent analyses.

Table 44: Tests of Discriminant Validity for Indebtedness Measurement Model in Study 2

Construct	AVE	I ⁶³	CNV	EER	EC	MI	LOY	PWOM
IA	.64							
IB	.54							

⁶⁰ Items adapted from Hess 1998; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004

⁶¹ Items adapted from Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003

⁶² Items adapted from Harris and Goode 2004; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996

⁶³ I = Indebtedness; CNV = Consumer norm violation; EER = Excessive extra-role behavior, MI = Mutual intentions; LOY = loyalty; and PWOM = Positive word-of-mouth.

Table 44 continued

IC	.65							
ID	.67							
INDEBTEDNESS	.31							
CNV	.74	.36						
EER	.43	.31	.21					
EC	.66	.24	.28	.47				
MI	.68	.06	.00	.07	.03			
Loyalty	.85	.03	.01	.00	.01	.01		
PWOM	.81	.15	.10	.05	.07	.00	.39	
PT	.86	.07	.03	.02	.03	.01	.62	.43

Issue 7: Examining Direct Effects—H4-H7

To test the direct effects between the antecedents and outcomes presented in Figure 13 (H4-H7), a structural model was created that included excessive customization, consumer norm violation and mutual intentions as exogenous constructs and customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment as endogenous constructs. Since excessive extra-role behavior failed to pass validity tests in Issue 6, excessive extra-role behavior was not included in this analysis and therefore, H5 could not be tested. The results of the structural model indicated good fit ($\chi^2 = 375.04$ (175), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06). Assessing the structural paths was of key importance to hypothesis testing. The results offered no support for H4, such that excessive customization had no effect on loyalty (standardized path estimate = -.08, $p > .05$), positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = -.08, $p > .05$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = -.06, $p > .05$). The results provided support for H6a, such that consumer norm violation had no effect on customer loyalty (standardized path estimate = -.05, $p > .05$); but offered support for H6b, such that consumer norm violation had a significant effect on positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = -.214, $p < .001$), and partial support for H6c since consumer norm violation had a marginally significant effect on preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = -.09, $p = .07$). Contrary to H7a, mutual intentions had a positive effect on customer loyalty (standardized path estimate = .129, $p < .05$), but had no effects on positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = -.06, $p > .05$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = -.02, $p > .05$), thus offering no support for H7b and H7c.

Issue 8: Examining Indebtedness as Mediator—H11-H14

Table 45: Hypotheses Results for Indirect Effects: Indebtedness

Antecedent Model	Loyalty	Positive Word-of-Mouth	Preferential Treatment
Excessive Customization	N ⁶⁴	F	F
Excessive Extra-Role	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mutual Intentions	P	N	N
Consumer Norm Violation	N	F	F

⁶⁴ F = Full mediation; P = Partial Mediation; N = Not supported; N/A = Excessive extra-role behavior was removed from the analysis due to being highly correlated with excessive customization and due to having low variance extracted and reliability estimates.

The next model tested indebtedness as the mediating construct between excessive customization, mutual intentions and consumer norm violation, and customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and preferential treatment (H11-H14; See Figure 13). First, an overall model was first estimated (See Figure 13). The results indicated good fit ($\chi^2 = 1125.52$, (725), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .04). Critical to this analysis was assessing the structural paths. All of the estimated paths were significant ($p < .05$). Specifically, excessive customization (standardized path estimate = .214, $p < .01$), consumer norm violation (standardized path estimate = .515, $p < .001$), and mutual intentions (standardized path estimate = .169, $p < .05$) generated customer felt indebtedness; and in turn, indebtedness negatively impacted loyalty (standardized path estimate = -.143, $p < .05$) positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = -.358, $p < .001$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = -.183, $p < .001$). Then the same procedures were followed as when testing gratitude as a mediator. Specifically, the overall model was divided into separate models. Each model included one antecedent, indebtedness and the three dependent constructs (See Appendix S for more detail regarding fit indices, path estimates and indirect effects). The results failed to support H11a, such that indebtedness did not mediate the effect of excessive customization on loyalty; however the results did offer evidence in support of H11b and H11c, such that indebtedness fully mediated the effects of excessive customization on positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment. H12 could not be tested since excessive extra-role behavior failed to attain acceptable reliability and validity estimates as noted in Issue 6. In support of H13a, indebtedness partially mediated the effect of mutual intentions on loyalty. Note that competitive mediation occurred (Zhao, Lynch Jr., and Chen 2010), since the direct effect of mutual intentions on loyalty was positive, while the indirect effect through indebtedness was negative. Mutual intentions had no effect on positive word-of-mouth or preferential treatment, thus no support for H13b or H13c was provided. Lastly, the results failed to provide evidence in support of H14a, such that indebtedness did not mediate the effect of consumer norm violation on loyalty; however, indebtedness fully mediated the effects of consumer norm violation on positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment; thus providing support for H14b and H14c (See Table 45).

Issue 9: Examining Relationship Quality, Trait Gratitude, Neuroticism and Agreeableness as Moderators—H16, 18, 20 and 22

Moderation was tested following the same procedures outlined above for gratitude (See Table 42 for measures). In testing the moderating role of relationship quality (H16), the results indicated that metric ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.06, $p > .05$) and structural ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.14, $p > .05$) invariance was achieved for low and high quality relationships. Although structural invariance was noted, pairwise comparisons were also evaluated to determine if any structural paths varied. The results further indicated that the effects of the antecedents on indebtedness and the effects of indebtedness on the dependent constructs did not vary by relationship quality. Thus, no support for H16 was offered.

Additional multi-group analyses were conducted to test the moderating roles of trait gratitude (H18), neuroticism (H20) and agreeableness (H20). The results demonstrated that the indebtedness model did not differ by participant's level of trait gratitude, since metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.26, $p > .05$) and structural invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.10, $p > .05$) was achieved.

Therefore no support for H18 was offered. Likewise, the indebtedness model was not moderated by neuroticism, as metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.33, $p > .05$) and structural invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.19, $p > .05$) was attained. Therefore, no evidence in support of H20 was provided. Lastly, the results failed to support H22, since no difference was found for varying levels of agreeableness, as metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.12, $p > .05$) and structural invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ test = 1.17, $p > .05$) was also achieved. Thus, these results indicate that the indebtedness model is not moderated by personality traits including gratitude, neuroticism, and agreeableness.

Issue 10: Verifying the Model Represents Indebtedness

The last step was to ensure that the model (See Figure 13) was representative of indebtedness and not gratitude. Therefore, to verify this representation, indebtedness was replaced by gratitude and the model was re-estimated. The results indicated adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 1028.97$ (580), $p < .001$, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05). The results offered evidence that the model presented in Figure 13 best represents indebtedness and not gratitude, such that mutual intentions had no effect on gratitude (standardized path estimate = .035, $p > .05$), and that excessive customization (standardized path estimate = -.218, $p < .01$) and consumer norm violation (standardized path estimate = -.245, $p < .001$) had negative effects on gratitude. In addition, gratitude had positive effects on loyalty (standardized path estimate = .565, $p < .001$), positive word-of-mouth (standardized path estimate = .597, $p < .001$) and preferential treatment (standardized path estimate = .148, $p < .01$). These results offer evidence that indebtedness rather than gratitude, is better represented in the conceptual model presented in Figure 13.

Summary of Study 2 Results

Study 2 was conducted to examine ten primary issues. The results of Study 2 demonstrated that (Issue 1) the gratitude model had strong measurement properties; and (Issue 2) identified several significant direct effects. Specifically, customization had significant effects on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment; extra-role behavior had a significant effect on positive word-of-mouth, but no effects on loyalty or preferential treatment; and benevolent intentions had a significant effect on loyalty, but no effects on positive word-of-mouth or preferential treatment. Moreover, the mediation results (Issue 3) supported gratitude as a mediator among customization, extra-role behavior and benevolent intentions on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment for all relationships except benevolent intentions and loyalty. The mediating effect between benevolent intentions and positive word-of-mouth could not be tested. Analyses also tested for moderation and demonstrated that (Issue 4) relationship quality did not act as a moderator to the gratitude model, although personality traits did suggest differences. Specifically, individuals high in agreeableness were more prone to experiencing gratitude than those low in agreeableness; however individuals' levels of trait gratitude and neuroticism had no moderating effects. Furthermore, the results indicated that (Issue 5) the conceptual model presented in Figure 12 best represented gratitude rather than indebtedness.

The results revealed (Issue 6) adequate measurement properties of the indebtedness model, and identified that (Issue 7) several of the direct effects for the indebtedness model were

not supported. The negative effects of consumer norm violation on positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment were the only two direct effects supported. However, significant direct effects were not necessary to test for mediation, since the effects can operate through mediating constructs (Zhao, Lynch Jr., and Chen 2010). Mediation tests indicated that (Issue 8) indebtedness fully mediated the effects of customization on positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment; partially mediated the effect of mutual intentions on loyalty; and fully mediated the effects of consumer norm violation on positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment. Furthermore, (Issue 9) these relationships were not moderated by relationship quality or personality traits including gratitude, agreeableness or neuroticism. Moreover, the results suggested that (Issue 10) the conceptual model presented in Figure 13 best represented indebtedness rather than gratitude.

DISCUSSION

This essay presents valuable contributions by offering additional evidence supporting that gratitude and indebtedness are different emotions and that these constructs mediate important marketing relationships. Moreover, this research yields several contributions, both theoretically and managerially. These will be commented on in the following section.

Theoretical Contributions

Theoretically, this research presents several contributions by: 1) identifying that the threat to self-esteem model is applicable to marketing constructs; 2) demonstrating that service provider behaviors which have traditionally been considered to generate positive customer reactions may in fact generate negative customer reactions; 3) offering additional explanatory evidence as to how relationship marketing activities can lead to positive outcomes; 4) presenting evidence of generalizability of the gratitude and indebtedness scales developed in Essay Two; and 5) by further distinguishing gratitude from indebtedness.

First, this research contributes to the marketing literature by applying the threat to self-esteem model to marketing constructs to further explain the effects of antecedents on important relationship marketing outcomes. More specifically, this is the first research to provide evidence that marketing constructs can be classified according to the threat to self-esteem theory, as self-supporting or self-threatening and produce positive or negative outcomes. As a result of being classified as supporting, customization extra role behavior and benevolent intentions generate positive customer reactions, including a feeling of gratitude, and tend to produce positive effects on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment. As a result of being classified as threatening, excessive customization and consumer norm violation produce negative customer reactions, such as indebtedness, which in turn negatively impacts customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment. Mutual intentions could not be classified as threatening; however it did produce a negative effect on loyalty through indebtedness. Moreover, this research contributes to the literature by demonstrating that customer felt gratitude and indebtedness function as mediators within the threat to self-esteem theory. Gratitude functioned as a mediator for the supportive elements, whereas indebtedness functioned as a mediator for the threatening elements. Interestingly, the direct effect of mutual intentions on loyalty was positive, whereas the indirect effect through indebtedness was negative. According to Zhao, Lynch Jr.,

and Chen (2010), this type of mediation is referred to as competitive mediation and suggests that other positive mediators exist. Therefore, future research may seek to identify additional mediating constructs between mutual intentions and loyalty.

Second, this work demonstrates that service provider behaviors that have traditionally been considered to generate positive customer reactions may in fact generate negative customer reactions. Specifically, past work has focused on the positive outcomes that can be promoted through service provider extra-role behavior or customization (Maxham and Netemeyer 2003); while the current research supports evidence of a tipping point. When service providers engage in excessive extra role behavior or excessive customization, consumers may experience indebtedness, which leads to undesirable outcomes—negative effects on loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment.

Third, this research offers a theoretical contribution to the relationship marketing literature by furthering our understanding of how relationship marketing activities impact exchange outcomes. Marketing research typically indicates that the effects of relationship investments can be explained by trust and commitment (Morgan and Hunt 1994). The current research demonstrates that customer felt gratitude and indebtedness further explain how relationship marketing activities impact exchange outcomes. In addition, this research also demonstrates how differences in relationship quality, trait gratitude and neuroticism do not affect the generation of customer felt gratitude and indebtedness, and their corresponding effects on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment. However, agreeableness was a personality construct that did effect the generation of gratitude. Particularly, extra-role behavior and benevolent intentions had stronger effects on gratitude for individuals scoring high on agreeableness.

Fourth, this work demonstrated metric invariance across different levels of relationship quality and personality traits, including trait gratitude, neuroticism and agreeableness. As noted by scholars, achieving metric invariance is not necessarily common (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003), but through achieving metric invariance, the generalizability of the scale is strongly enhanced (Bollen 1989; Marsh 1995; Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003; Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998). Thus, the current work provides additional evidence in support of the gratitude and indebtedness scales developed in Essay Two, and indicates that the applicability of these scales is likely to be widespread.

Fifth, this research also offers a contribution to our understanding of gratitude and indebtedness. Previous marketing research has equated gratitude and indebtedness (Palmatier et al. 2009), and as a result, research has failed to discriminate between the effects of these two emotions. This research contributes to the field by demonstrating the different causes and effects of these emotions on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment; and further differentiates these emotions by identifying the different functions gratitude and indebtedness play within the threat to self-esteem theory.

Managerial Contributions

This research also makes significant contributions to practice by demonstrating the significance of eliciting customer gratitude and indebtedness. Customer felt gratitude has a positive impact, while indebtedness has a negative impact on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment; and these effects hold for both high and low quality relationships. Given the importance of generating customer loyalty, this research provides managers with a prescription of behaviors that can elicit customer gratitude or mitigate customer indebtedness, and in turn, generate customer loyalty. Considering that over \$1.2 billion is spent on improving customer loyalty (Wagner, Hennig-Thurau, and Rudolph 2009), practices that elicit customer gratitude, such as those discussed in this research, are anticipated to be extremely cost effective. Gratitude was also found to have a positive impact, while indebtedness was found to have a negative impact on a very effective means of advertising, positive word-of-mouth (Day 1971). Consumers view positive word-of-mouth as extremely credible, and as a result, positive word-of-mouth is highly persuasive to consumers. The associations among gratitude, indebtedness, and positive word-of-mouth offer a significant contribution to marketing research. Lastly, consumers grant preferential treatment to service providers to whom they are grateful for. Being first in a consumer's consideration set as well as being preferred over competition is a significant advantage for any service provider. Since grateful customers tend to provide these benefits to service providers, this presents further evidence of the benefits to be reaped when generating customer felt gratitude.

Additionally, this work identifies a fine line that service providers may have to walk. Going too far beyond customer expectations, such as by engaging in excessive customization or extra-role behavior generates a negative customer reaction, indebtedness. This suggests that a key issue for managers is determining service provider behaviors that are considered appropriate, relevant and expected by customers. Since customer expectations may not always be consistent with a service provider's or a manager's expectations, this further demonstrates the importance of considering how customers interpret service provider behavior.

In closing, this research presents managers with an understanding of the service provider (i.e. front-line employees, retailers, sales representatives, etc.) behaviors that elicit customer felt gratitude and indebtedness, and identifies several advantages and disadvantages of doing so; in addition, this work demonstrates the importance of understanding customer expectations and interpretations.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to further examine and explain the relationships between antecedents and consequences in relationship marketing research with the threat to self-esteem model. In doing so, this research also sought to identify if gratitude and indebtedness mediate these relationships. Following the threat to self-esteem model, the results indicated that customization, extra-role behavior and benevolent intentions could be classified as supportive elements in a helping situation, and that excessive extra-role behavior, excessive customization and consumer norm violation could be classified as threatening elements in a helping situation. In addition, the results indicated that several direct effects between supportive antecedents

(customization, extra-role behavior and benevolent intentions) and valuable marketing outcomes (customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment) exist; however the direct effects of threatening antecedents were less established. The effects of consumer norm violation on positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment were the only significant effects for the indebtedness conceptual model. Moreover, gratitude and indebtedness oftentimes functioned as mediators to these relationships, and these relationships held across levels of relationship quality, trait gratitude and neuroticism. The results further indicated that highly agreeable individuals were more prone to experiencing gratitude. This research offers several theoretical contributions by identifying that the threat to self-esteem model can be applied to marketing constructs, by demonstrating that service provider behaviors can produce positive and negative customer reactions, by offering additional explanatory effects of the relationship between relationship marketing activities and marketing outcomes, by offering evidence of generalizability and by distinguishing gratitude and indebtedness. This work also presents managerial contributions by demonstrating simple and easily implementable front line employee behaviors that can generate customer felt gratitude or indebtedness, by identifying advantages and disadvantages that can be reaped (i.e. positive or negative impacts on customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and preferential treatment) through generating these emotions, and by demonstrating the importance of understanding customer expectations and interpretations.

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APPENDIX A

EMOTIONS EXAMINED IN JCR, JMR, AND JM⁶⁵ FROM 2000-2010

Author	Guilt	Regret	Sad	Anger	Worry ⁶⁶	Shame	Fear	Distress
Labroo and Rucker (2010)			√	√	√			
Agrawal and Duhachek (2010)	√					√		
Griskevicius, Goldstein, Mortensen, Sundie, Cialdini, and Kenrick (2009)							√	
Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan (2007)	√		√		√			
Agrawal, Menon, and Aaker (2007)			√					
Ehrich and Irwin (2005)				√				
Keinan and Kivetz (2008)		√						
Aaker, Drolet, and Griffin (2008)			√					
Mandel and Nowlis (2008)		√						
Passyn and Sujan (2006)	√	√					√	
Botti, Orfali, and Iyengar (2009)	√	√						√
Ramanathan and Williams (2007)	√	√	√	√	√	√		
Labroo and Ramanathan (2007)		√	√					√
Morales (2005)	√							
Total	6	6	6	3	3	2	2	2

⁶⁵ JCR = Journal of Consumer Research; JMR = Journal of Marketing Research; and JM = Journal of Marketing

⁶⁶ Also refers to anxiety

Author	Joy	Pride	Love	Peacefulness	Excitement	Gratitude	Romantic Love
Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan. (2008)	√	√			√		
Garg, Wansink, and Inman (2007)	√						
Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff, and Kardes (2009)						√	
Chandy, Tellis, Macinnis, and Thaivanich (2001)		√	√				
Hong and Lee (2010)	√						
Griskevicius, Shiota, and Nowlis (2010)		√					
Kim, Park, and Schwarz (2010)				√	√		
Valenzuela, Mellers, and Strebel (2010)	√						
Lau-Gesk and Meyers-Levy (2009)	√						
Labroo and Mukhopadhyay (2009)	√						
Fisher, Vanderbosch, and Antia (2008)		√	√				
Mandel and Nowlis (2008)	√						
Mukhopadhyay and Johar (2007)	√	√					
Labroo and Ramanathan (2007)	√		√				
Bosmans and Baumgartner (2005)	√						
Morales (2005)						√	
Argo, Dahl, and Manchanda (2005)	√	√					
Louro, Pieters, and Zeelenberg (2005)		√					
Fisher and Dubé (2005)	√		√	√			√
Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003)							√
Williams and Aaker (2002)	√						
Laverie, Kleine III, and Kleine (2002)		√					
Howard and Gengler (2001)	√						
Agrawal, Menon, and Aaker (2007)	√			√			
Labroo and Rucker (2010)	√			√			
Goode, Dahl, and Moreau (2010)	√				√		
Small and Verrochi (2009)	√						
Griskevicius, Goldstein, Mortensen, Sundie, Cialdini, and Kenrick (2009)							√
Irwin and Naylor (2009)	√						
Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan (2007)	√				√		
Total	20	8	4	4	4	2	3

APPENDIX B

KEY COMPONENTS OF GRATITUDE DEFINITIONS

Author	Definition	Emotion	Benefactor ⁶⁷	Beneficiary	Recognition ⁶⁸	Positive ⁶⁹ Response
Smith (1976)	"the sentiment which most immediately and directly prompts us to reward" p. 68	√				
Palmatier et al. (2009)	"the emotional appreciation for benefits received, accompanied by a desire to reciprocate" p. 1	√				√
Guralnik (1971)	"a feeling of thankful appreciation for favors received" p. 327	√				√
Fitzgerald (1998)	"Gratitude is an emotion or a set of feelings. One feels grateful. This emotion has three components. Gratitude is: 1) a warm sense of appreciation for somebody or something, 2) a sense of goodwill toward that person or thing, and 3) a disposition to act that flows from appreciation and goodwill." p. 120	√	√			√
Lazarus and Lazarus (1994)	"one of the empathic emotions that reflects recognition or appreciation of an altruistic gift"	√			√	√
Emmons and Crumpler (2000)	"Gratitude is an emotional response to a gift. It is the appreciation felt after one has been the beneficiary of an altruistic act." p. 56-57	√	√	√		√
Emmons (2004)	"a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be a tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss evoked by natural beauty" p. 554	√	√	√		√
Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988).	"a blend of admiration and joy that results when a beneficiary approves of a benefactor's actions and experiences the benefactor's actions to be personally favorable."	√	√	√		√
Adler and Fagley. (2005)	"refers to noticing and acknowledging a benefit that has been received, whether from another person or a deity, and feeling thankful for the efforts, sacrifices, and actions of an other" p. 83	√	√	√	√	√
Tsang (2006a)	"A positive emotional reaction to the receipt of a benefit that is perceived to have resulted from the good intentions of another" p.139	√	√	√	√	√
Fredrickson	"the emotion that arises when an individual (beneficiary)					

⁶⁷ Or another source responsible

⁶⁸ Or perception

⁶⁹ Beneficiary's positive affective response

(2004)	perceives that another person (benefactor) or source (e.g. God, luck, fate) has intentionally acted to improve the beneficiary's well-being" p. 150	√	√	√	√	
Bartlett and DeSteno (2006)	"a positive emotion one feels when another person has intentionally given, or attempted to give, one something of value." p. 319	√	√			√
McCullough (2002)	"a cognitive-affective response to the recognition that one has been the beneficiary (or, in some cases, only the intended beneficiary) of someone else's good will ." p. 303	√	√	√	√	
Roberts (2004)	"a concern-based construal in which the subject construes the situation in the following terms. He or she construes himself or herself (the beneficiary) as the recipient of some good (the benefice) from a giver (benefactor)." p. 61		√	√	√	
McCullough et al. (2001)	"Conceptualize gratitude as a moral affect. Gratitude is both a response to moral behavior and a motivator of moral behavior. People respond with gratitude when other people behave in a way that promotes the beneficiaries' well-being. Beneficiaries also act in ways that promote the well-being of others when they themselves have been made grateful. Finally, expressing gratitude to one's benefactors stimulates the benefactors to behave prosocially in the future." p. 250	√	√	√		
Emmons and McCullough (2003)	"As an emotion, gratitude stems from the perception that one has experienced a positive outcome that has been intentionally provided by another person or "moral agent," often but not necessarily a person" p. 377	√	√	√	√	
McCullough, Kimeldorf, and Cohen (2008)	"a positive emotion that typically flows from the perception that one has benefited from the costly, intentional, voluntary action of another person" p. 281	√	√	√	√	√
Weiner (1985)	"As an emotion, gratitude is an attribution-dependent state that results from two stages of information processing: (a) recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome; and (b) recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome."	√	√	√	√	
Soscia (2007)	"People typically feel grateful when they attribute their positive outcomes or personal successes, at least in part, to others rather than to themselves alone. The desirability of an outcome from a personal viewpoint, which is the typical perspective of consumers, is an important element in gratitude...Gratitude focuses on specific actions for which other people are perceived	√	√	√	√	

	as responsible" p. 877-878					
Bertocci and Millard (1963)	"as the willingness to recognize the unearned increments of value in one's experience" p. 389				√	
Solomon (1977)	"an estimate of gain coupled with the judgment that someone else is responsible for that gain" p. 316		√		√	
Buck (2004)	"a higher level moral emotion involving a constellation of interpersonal/situational contingencies, including the acknowledgment that a) one has received benefits and b) one's power is limited (humility)." p. 101	√	√	√	√	
Weiner and Graham (1989)	"a stimulus to return a favor to the other and thus reintroduce balance" p. 403		√	√		
Kant (1964)	"honoring a person because of a kindness he has done us" p. 123		√	√		
Brown (1820)	"that delightful emotion of love to him who has conferred a kindness on us, the very feeling of which is itself no small part of the benefit conferred" p. 291	√	√	√		√
Number of Articles Including Component		20	20	17	13	12
Percentage of Total Definitions		80%	80%	68%	52%	48%

Author	Altruistic Acts By Another	Benefit Received	Intentional Behavior	Beneficiary's Behavioral Response	Positive Outcome	Beneficiary's Well-Being
Smith (1976)				√		
Palmatier et al. (2009)		√		√		

Guralnik (1971)		√				
Fitzgerald (1998)				√		
Lazarus and Lazarus (1994)	√					√
Emmons and Crumpler (2000)	√					
Emmons (2004)		√				
Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988).						√
Adler and Fagley. (2005)	√	√				
Tsang (2006a)	√	√	√			
Fredrickson (2004)	√		√			√
Bartlett and DeSteno (2006)			√			
McCullough (2002)	√					
Roberts (2004)		√				
McCullough et al. (2001)	√			√		√
Emmons and						

McCullough (2003)			√		√	
McCullough, Kimeldorf, and Cohen (2008)		√	√			
Weiner (1985)					√	
Soscia (2007)					√	
Bertocci and Millard (1963)						
Solomon (1977)					√	
Buck (2004)		√				
Weiner and Graham (1989)				√		
Kant (1964)	√					
Brown (1820)	√	√				
Number of Articles Including Component	9	9	5	5	4	4
Percentage of Total Definitions	36%	36%	20%	20%	16%	16%

Author	Gift	Moral	Value	Costly	Voluntary Action	Unexpected⁷⁰	Humility	Honoring Another
Smith (1976)								
Palmatier et al. (2009)								
Guralnik (1971)								
Fitzgerald (1998)								
Lazarus and Lazarus (1994)	√							
Emmons and Crumpler (2000)	√							
Emmons (2004)	√							
Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988).								
Adler and Fagley. (2005)								
Tsang (2006a)								
Fredrickson (2004)								
Bartlett and DeSteno (2006)			√					
McCullough (2002)								
Roberts (2004)								
McCullough et al. (2001)		√						
Emmons and McCullough (2003)		√						
McCullough, Kimeldorf, and Cohen (2008)				√	√			
Weiner (1985)								

⁷⁰ Or undeserved

Soscia (2007)								
Bertocci and Millard (1963)			√			√		
Solomon (1977)								
Buck (2004)		√					√	
Weiner and Graham (1989)								
Kant (1964)								√
Brown (1820)								
Number of Articles Including Component	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1
Percentage of Total Definitions	12%	12%	8%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%

APPENDIX C

PSYCHOLOGY MEASURES OF GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS

Author	Context	Construct Measured	Measures
Algoe et al. (2010)	Romantic Relationships	Gratitude	Thankfulness, Appreciation, and Gratitude
		Indebtedness	Indebted
Emmons and McCullough (2003)	Gratitude Outlook	Gratitude	Grateful, Thankful, and Appreciative
Watkins et al. 2006	Helping a friend move	Gratitude	Grateful
		Indebtedness	Indebted
Tsang (2006)	Distributing Raffle Tickets	Gratitude	Grateful, Thankful and Appreciative
		Indebtedness	Indebted, obligated
Tsang (2006)	Helping a friend pay for books	Gratitude	Grateful, Appreciative, and Thankful
		Indebtedness	Indebted, Obligated

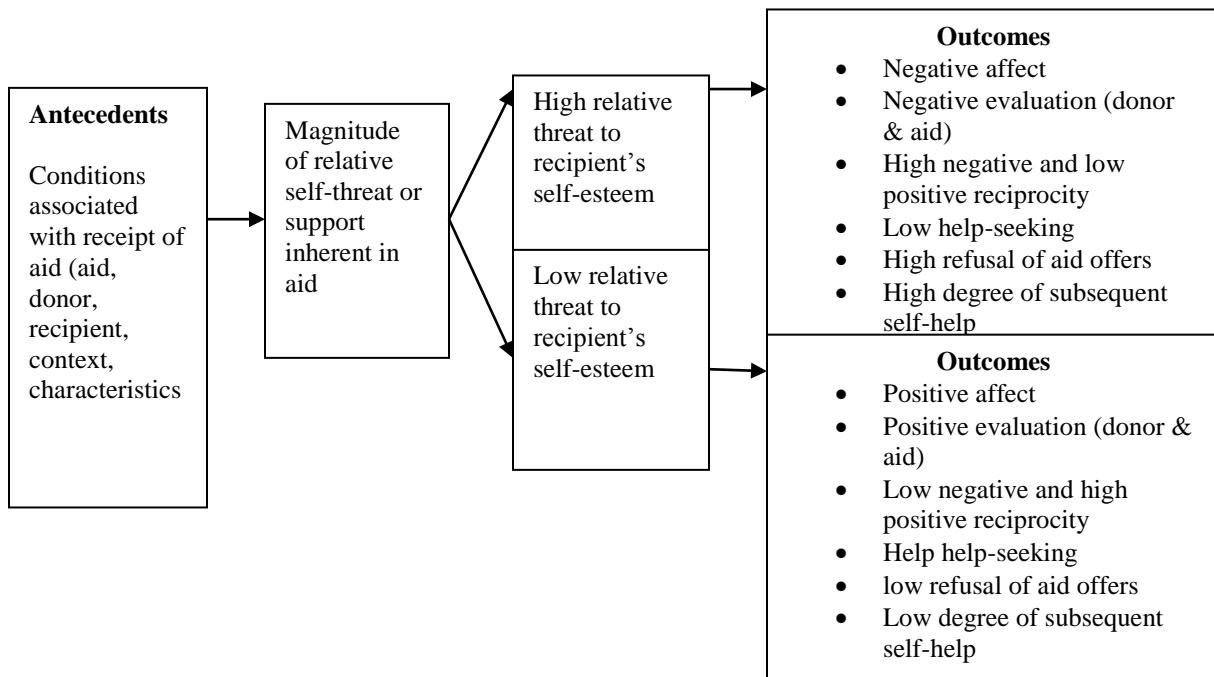
APPENDIX D

MARKETING MEASURES OF GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS

Author	Context	Labeled Construct Measured	Measures
Dawson (1988)	Consumer Charitable Giving	Reciprocity measures as past benefits received and feelings of indebtedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “When I was growing up, members of my family benefited from the activities of charitable organizations” • “The research activities of charities have improved the quality of life of people who are close to me” • “There are some charitable institutions I feel indebted to for helping my family and friends in the past” • “Certain charities have been responsible for improving the quality of life of people close to me”
Dorsch and Kelley (1994)	B2B	Indebtedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have a strong sense of personal duty to repay the favor” • “It is very important for me to repay the favor” • “I expect to repay the favor” • “I have a strong sense of professional duty to repay the favor” • “I have a strong sense of duty to repay received”
Johnson and Sohi (2001)	B2B	Reciprocity measured as willingness to do a favor, expectation that a partner will do a favor, and feelings of obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We are always willing to do this supplier a favor because we know it will be returned” • “This supplier is always willing to do us a favor because they know that it will be returned” • “This supplier always helps and supports us and we do likewise” • “In this relationship, both partners feel that one good turn deserves another” • “This supplier makes sure that they do their part because they realize we will do ours” • “We feel obliged to do our part extremely well in this relationship because this supplier has done their part so well”
Morales (2005)	Consumer	Measures gratitude	“Average of grateful and appreciative feelings”
Palmatier et al. (2009)	B2C	Customers’ Feelings of Gratitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I feel grateful to [target]” • “I feel thankful to [target]” • “I feel appreciative to [target]”
	B2B	Customers’ Gratitude-Based Reciprocal Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have bought products based on our gratitude for their extra effort” • “We have given more business to this [target] because we owed it to them” • “This [target] has received opportunities to sell additional products as payback for past efforts”

APPENDIX E

THREAT TO SELF-ESTEEM MODEL



*Fisher, Nadler, and Whitcher-Alagna 1983

APPENDIX F EXPERT JUDGE REVIEW FORM

GRATITUDE

Will you please assist me by reviewing a series of items that I have created to represent “gratitude?” My preliminary research suggests gratitude is a multidimensional construct (i.e. affect, behavior, cognition and duration), and it is defined as **a positive, enduring emotion that is accompanied by positive attributions of the other party, and the intent to benefit the other party.**

I would really appreciate if you would be willing to evaluate the degree to which each of the following items represent the construct. In addition, your help on item wording, content, clarity, possible new items, ease of use, proper reading level, or wording effects would be greatly appreciated.

Instructions:

The following pages are organized into four sections based on the four dimensions of gratitude: duration, behavior (intent), cognition, and affect. At the beginning of each section, a definition of one dimension of gratitude will be provided. Next, a table of items proposed to tap the corresponding dimension will be provided.

First, read each item and, based on the provided definition, please indicate the extent to which you believe the item is representative of the related dimension. You can do this by placing a “1”, “2”, or “3” in the box on the right hand column at the end of the item. Next, please make any edits to each item that you believe will improve it; there is a space below each item for such edits and comments. Each section will also conclude with a blank space for you to add additional items that you believe represent the dimension.

1 = Not Representative 2 = Somewhat Representative 3 = Very Representative

Enduring-the emotion is long-lived.

Note: In the following items, the words repay, reciprocate, give back, and return the favor imply doing whatever you think you need to do for the other party.

	Rating Column
Once I repay, I will continue to feel the same.	
I will still feel this way after I reciprocate.	
Doing something for the other person would not change the feeling I’m experiencing.	

Even after I return the favor, I will continue to feel this way.	
I'll feel the same even after I reciprocate.	
I'll feel this way towards the other person for a long time.	
I will feel this emotion even after I do something in return.	
It doesn't matter if I repay the person now or later, I will still feel the same.	
Even if I don't repay, I will feel this way for a long time.	
This feeling will stick with me, even after I return the favor.	
Once I do something to repay the other party, I will still feel this feeling.	
This feeling will last for a long time, even after I reciprocate.	
This is a feeling I will continue to experience, even after I return the favor.	
This emotion will stay with me a long time after I do something for the other person.	
Even after I repay, I'll feel this way towards the other person for a long time.	
Regardless of when I return the favor, this feeling will remain.	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the enduring dimension of gratitude that was not among the previous items:

Behavior (Reciprocal Intent) --There is an intent to benefit the other party's welfare

		Rating Column
1	I want to do something to improve the other person's well-being.	
2	I want to help the other person out.	
3	My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit the other person.	
4	I want to do something for the other person's benefit.	
5	Making sure the other person receives benefits is important to me.	
6	It is my intent that doing something for the other person would benefit the other party.	
7	My goal is to find a way to help the other person.	
8	I would like to benefit the other person.	
9	I want to do something to benefit the other person.	
10	I want to return the favor.	
12	I don't feel like it's my duty, I just want to do something for the other person.	
13	I want to do something for the other party's sake, even if they aren't expecting anything in return.	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the behavior dimension of gratitude that was not among the previous items:

Cognition: The individual makes positive attributions about the other party

	Rating Column
I think the other person is sincere.	
I think the other person is a good person	
The other person is genuine	
I have positive thoughts about the other person	
I am thinking good things about the other person	
The other person is caring	
My thoughts are focused on the other party	
I think the other person is honest	
I think the other person is reputable	
I think the other person is trustworthy	
I think the other person is authentic	
I think the other person is candid.	
I think the other person is warm-hearted	
I think the other person is respectful	
I think the other person is considerate	
I think the other person is thoughtful	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the cognitive dimension of gratitude that was not among the previous items:

Positive (affect): the emotion is pleasant

		Rating Column
1	I feel grateful	
2	I feel appreciative	
3	I feel thankful	
4	I feel relieved	
5	I feel at ease	
6	I like the way I feel	
7	I feel like a weight is off my shoulder	
8	I don't feel like something is hanging over my head	
9	I feel cordial towards the other person	
10	I am valued	
11	I am supported	
12	I am important	
13	I am cared about	
14	I feel special	
15	I feel admired	
16	I feel cherished	
17	I feel treasured	
18	I feel respected	
19	I feel like a load has been taken off my mind	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the positive (affect) dimension of gratitude that was not among the previous items:

INDEBTEDNESS

Will you please assist me by reviewing a series of items that I have created to represent “indebtedness?” My preliminary research suggests indebtedness is a multidimensional construct (i.e. affect, behavior, cognition and duration), and it is defined as **a mixed or negative (affect), un-enduring (duration) emotion that is accompanied by thoughts about the self and the inequity within the relationship between themselves and the other party (cognition), and the intent to benefit one's own welfare (behavior)?**

I would really appreciate if you would be willing to evaluate the degree to which each of the following items represent the construct. In addition, your help on item wording, content, clarity, possible new items, ease of use, proper reading level, or wording effects would be greatly appreciated.

Instructions:

The following pages are organized into four sections based on the four dimensions of indebtedness: duration, behavior (intent), cognition, and affect. At the beginning of each section, a definition of one dimension of indebtedness will be provided. Next, a table of items proposed to tap the corresponding dimension will be provided.

First, read each item and, based on the provided definition, please indicate the extent to which you believe the item is representative of the related dimension. You can do this by placing a “1”, “2”, or “3” in the box on the right hand column at the end of the item. Next, please make any edits to each item that you believe will improve it; there is a space below each item for such edits and comments. Each section will also conclude with a blank space for you to add additional items that you believe represent the dimension.

1 = Not Representative 2 = Somewhat Representative 3 = Very Representative

Duration: The emotion is short-lived.

Note: In the following items, the words repay, reciprocate, give back, and return the favor imply doing whatever you think you need to do for the other party.

		Rating Column
1	Once I repay, I'll immediately feel differently.	
2	The quicker I act, the sooner it is off my mind.	
3	Doing something for the other person would immediately rid this feeling.	
4	After I return the favor, I will no longer feel this way.	

5	I'll feel differently the sooner I do something for the other person.	
6	I won't feel this way towards the other person for very long.	
7	Once I return the favor, I won't feel this emotion very long.	
8	Even if I don't repay, I won't feel this way for too long.	
9	The longer I wait to do something, the worse I would feel.	
10	This feeling will stick with me until I return the favor.	
11	The quicker I return the favor, the better I will feel.	
12	After I repay, I won't feel this way towards the other person for very long.	
13	Once I do something to repay the other party, I won't feel this way anymore.	
14	This feeling will go away after I reciprocate.	
15	Since I am going to repay quickly, this feeling will go away soon.	
16	This is a feeling that will go away after I return the favor.	
17	This emotion will disappear after I do something for the other person.	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the duration dimension of indebtedness that was not among the previous items:

Behavior (Reciprocal Intent): there is an intent to benefit one's own welfare

	Rating Column
I want to do something to improve my well-being.	
Returning the favor helps me out.	
My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit me.	
I want to do something that would re-establish equity to my relationship with the other person.	
Actions that improve my welfare are important to me.	
It is my intent that doing something for the other person would improve the way I feel.	
My goal is to improve my well-being.	
I would like to get myself out of this feeling	
I want my actions to benefit me.	
I grudgingly return the favor.	
I feel like it is my duty to do something for the other person	
I want to do something for my sake even if they (the other person) aren't expecting anything in return.	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the behavior dimension of indebtedness that was not among the previous items:

Cognition: The individual thinks about him/herself and the inequity between themselves and the other party.

		Rating Column
1	I am thinking about the position I am in	
2	I am thinking about the inequity between myself and the other party.	
3	I owe the other person	
4	I think I need to compensate	
5	I am thinking about how to improve the condition I am in	
6	I am thinking about how to balance my relationship with the other person	
7	I am thinking about bringing equity to my relationship with the other person	
8	I am thinking about myself and how I feel	
9	I am thinking about the inequity within the situation.	
10	I thinking of ridding the situation that I am in	
11	I am thinking about my duties	
12	I am thinking about the state that I'm in	
13	I find myself worrying about the situation that I am in	
14	I put a lot of thought into how I am going to get out of the situation that I am in	
15	My thoughts are focused on myself	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the cognitive dimension of indebtedness that was not among the previous items:

Affect (Mixed/Negative): It is uncomfortable and aversive to experience

	Rating Column
I feel indebted	
I feel obligated	
I feel bothered	
I feel like my hands are tied	
I feel troubled	
I don't like the way I feel	
I feel like a weight is on my shoulder	
I feel like something is hanging over my head	
I feel hostile towards the other person	
I feel tense	
I feel like I've been roped in	
I feel manipulated	
I feel like I'm being managed	
I feel like I've been conned	
I feel like I've been taken advantage of	
I feel like I'm part of someone's plot	
I feel like I've been baited	
I feel constrained	

Please list below any additional items that you feel are representative of the negative (affect) dimension of indebtedness that was not among the previous items:

APPENDIX G

GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS ITEMS INCLUDED IN STUDIES

Gratitude Affect Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
I feel grateful	X	X	X	X	X
I feel appreciative	X	X	X	X	X
I feel thankful	X	X	X	X	X
I feel relieved	X	X			
I feel at ease	X				
I like the way I feel	X				
I feel like a weight is off my shoulder	X	X			
I don't feel like something is hanging over my head	X				
I feel cordial towards the other person	X				
I am valued	X	X	X	X	X
I am supported	X	X	X	X	
I am important	X	X			
I am cared about	X	X			
I feel special	X	X	X	X	X
I feel admired	X	X			
I feel cherished	X	X			
I feel treasured	X	X	X	X	
I feel respected	X	X	X	X	X
I feel like a load has been taken off my mind	X				
Gratitude Behavior Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
I want to do something to improve the other person's well-being.	X	X	X	X	X
I want to help the other person out.	X	X	X	X	X
My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit the other person.	X	X			
I want to do something for the other person's benefit.	X	X	X	X	X
Making sure the other person receives benefits is important to me.	X	X			
It is my intent that doing something for the other person would benefit the other party.	X	X			
My goal is to find a way to help the other person.	X	X			
I would like to benefit the other person.	X				
I want to do something to benefit the other person.	X	X	X	X	X
I want to return the favor.	X	X	X	X	X

I don't feel like it's my duty, I just want to do something for the other person.	X				
I want to do something for the other party's sake.	X	X	X	X	X
Gratitude Cognition Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
I think the other person is sincere.	X	X			
I think the other person is a good person	X	X	X	X	X
The other person is genuine	X	X	X	X	X
I have positive thoughts about the other person	X	X			
I am thinking good things about the other person	X	X			
The other person is caring	X	X	X	X	X
My thoughts are focused on the other party	X				
I think the other person is honest	X	X	X	X	X
I think the other person is reputable	X	X			
I think the other person is trustworthy	X	X			
I think the other person is authentic	X	X			
I think the other person is candid.	X				
I think the other person is warm-hearted	X	X			
I think the other person is respectful	X	X	X	X	X
I think the other person is considerate	X	X			
I think the other person is thoughtful	X	X	X	X	X
Gratitude Duration Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
Once I repay, I will continue to feel the same.	X	X	X	X ⁷¹	
I will still feel this way after I reciprocate.	X	X	X	X	
Doing something for the other person would not change the feeling I'm experiencing.	X				
Even after I return the favor, I will continue to feel this way.	X	X			
I'll feel the same, even after I reciprocate.	X	X	X	X	
I'll feel this way towards the other person for a long time.	X	X			
I will feel this emotion even after I do something in return.	X	X	X	X	
It doesn't matter if I repay the person now or later, I will still feel the same.	X	X			
Even if I don't repay, I will feel this way for a long time.	X	X			
This feeling will stick with me, even after I	X	X	X	X	

⁷¹ Gratitude duration items were included in Study 4 to further verify the low correlations with other gratitude dimensions exhibited in Study 3.

return the favor.					
Once I do something to repay the other party, I will still feel this feeling.	X	X			
This feeling will last for a long time, even after I reciprocate.	X	X	X	X	
This is a feeling I will continue to experience, even after I return the favor.	X	X			
This emotion will stay with me a long time after I do something for the other person.	X	X			
Even after I repay, I'll feel this way towards the other person for a long time.	X	X			
Regardless of when I return the favor, this feeling will remain.	X	X			
Indebtedness Affect Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
I feel indebted	X	X	X	X	X
I feel obligated	X	X	X	X	X
I feel bothered	X	X	X	X	X
I feel like my hands are tied	X	X	X	X	X
I feel troubled	X	X			
I don't like the way I feel	X	X			
I feel like a weight is on my shoulder	X	X			
I feel like something is hanging over my head	X	X	X	X	X
I feel hostile towards the other person	X				
I feel tense	X	X	X	X	X
I feel like I've been roped in	X	X			
I feel manipulated	X	X			
I feel like I'm being managed	X				
I feel like I've been conned	X	X			
I feel like I've been taken advantage of	X	X			
I feel like I'm part of someone's plot	X				
I feel like I've been baited	X	X			
I feel constrained	X	X	X	X	X
I feel trapped.	X	X ⁷²	X	X	X
Indebtedness Behavior Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
I want to do something to improve my well-being.	X	X	X		
Returning the favor helps me out.	X	X			
My main purpose of reciprocating would be to benefit me.	X	X	X	X	X
I want to do something that would re-	X				

⁷² Item was suggested by an expert judge

establish equity to my relationship with the other person.					
Actions that improve my welfare are important to me.	X	X			
It is my intent that doing something for the other person would improve the way I feel.	X	X			
My goal is to improve my well-being.	X	X	X	X	
I would like to rid myself of this feeling	X	X			
I want my actions to benefit me.	X	X	X	X	X
I grudgingly return the favor.	X	X	X		
I feel like it is my duty to do something for the other person	X	X			
I want to do something for my sake.	X	X	X	X	X
Indebtedness Cognition Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
I am thinking about the position I am in	X	X			
I am thinking about resolving the position I am in.			X ⁷³	X	X
I am thinking about handling my relationship with the other party.			X	X	X
I am thinking about settling my relationship with the other party.			X	X	X
I am thinking about clearing up my relationship with the other party.			X	X	X
I am thinking about the inequity between myself and the other party.	X	X			
I owe the other person	X	X	X	X	
I think I need to compensate	X	X	X		
I am thinking about how to improve the condition I am in	X	X			
I am thinking about how to balance my relationship with the other person	X	X			
I am thinking about bringing equity to my relationship with the other person	X	X			
I am thinking about myself and how I feel	X	X			
I am thinking about the inequity within the situation.	X	X			
I thinking of ridding the situation that I am in	X				
I am thinking about my duties	X	X			
I am thinking about the state that I'm in	X				
I find myself worrying about the situation that I am in	X				
I put a lot of thought into how I am going to	X	X			

⁷³ Items were added to reflect the individual thinking about resolving inequity

get out of the situation that I am in					
My thoughts are focused on myself	X	X			
Indebtedness Duration Items	Included in Study 1	Included in Study 2	Included in Study 3	Included in Study 4	Final Scale Item
Once I repay, I'll immediately feel differently.	X	X			
The quicker I act, the sooner it is off my mind.	X	X			
Doing something for the other person would immediately rid this feeling.	X	X	X	X	X
After I return the favor, I will no longer feel this way.	X	X	X	X	X
I'll feel differently the sooner I do something for the other person.	X	X	X	X	X
I won't feel this way towards the other person for very long.	X				
Once I return the favor, I won't feel this emotion very long.	X				
Even if I don't repay, I won't feel this way for too long.	X				
The longer I wait to do something, the worse I would feel.	X				
This feeling will stick with me until I return the favor.	X	X			
The quicker I return the favor, the better I will feel.	X	X			
After I repay, I won't feel this way towards the other person for very long.	X	X			
Once I do something to repay the other party, I won't feel this way anymore.	X	X	X	X	X
This feeling will go away after I reciprocate.	X	X	X	X	X
Since I am going to repay quickly, this feeling will go away soon.	X				
This is a feeling that will go away after I return the favor.	X	X			
This emotion will disappear after I do something for the other person.	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX H

SCENARIOS USED IN ESSAY TWO STUDIES 2 AND 3

Gratitude

Imagine that your car breaks down while driving home after work. You are supposed to be going out of town the next day. You get towed to the nearest automotive repair shop. You ask the mechanic if it is possible for your car to be fixed so that you can still make your trip.

The mechanic points to a really nice customer waiting room and replies, “I understand your situation, and don’t worry. Everything is going to be okay. Just make yourself at home. I’m going to look into it and do everything that I can so that you can make your trip tomorrow.”

You decide to go take a seat in the waiting room. While waiting, you scroll through some magazines, make a few phone calls, and create a packing list for your trip – although you do have a lot already packed in the back seat of your car. You realize that the mechanic is willing to stay after hours to help you out and fix your car, and he does end up staying late.

In the end, he did fix your car - He even ran it through the car wash. And you think, awesome! You pay for the service and go home for the evening to finish packing.

Indebtedness

Imagine that your car breaks down while driving home after work. You are supposed to be going out of town the next day. You get towed to the nearest automotive repair shop. You ask the mechanic if it is possible for your car to be fixed so that you can still make your trip.

The mechanic points to a wall of merchandise and replies, “I know you. You’re in a class that I’m taking.” You realize he is in your summer class and you say that you’ve seen him. The mechanic says, “We carry a large selection of vehicle necessities in the other room, I sure there is something in there that you need. Why don’t you look around while I squeeze your car into my busy schedule. Otherwise, we do have a waiting room over there.” The mechanic points to the waiting room.

You decide to go take a seat in the waiting room. While waiting, you scroll through some magazines, make a few phone calls, and create a packing list for your trip – although you do have a lot already packed in the back seat of your car. You realize that the mechanic is staying late to fix your car. You decide to go look at the merchandise the mechanic mentioned, but you don’t really feel like purchasing any of it. It all seems like stuff you already have or stuff you just don’t like. You go back and sit down in the waiting room.

In the end, he did fix your car but also ran it through the car wash, vacuumed it and gave you new car mats. And you think, seriously? While paying for the service, he says, “By the way, you know I do oil changes, tire rotations, and regular checkups, maybe you can consider that for the future.” You pay for the service and go home for the evening to finish packing.

APPENDIX I
EIGHT FACTOR SOLUTION OF GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS
ITEMS

	Factor							
	GC	ID	GD	IB/IC	IA	GA	IA/IC	GB
gc7	.870							
gc14	.861							
gc3	.829							
gc12	.823							
gc2	.797							
gc5	.763							
gc11	.758							
gc13	.735							
gc6	.722							
gc1	.719							
gc4	.709							
gc9	.699							
gc10	.665							
gc8	.653							
id3		.811						
id4		.771						
id5		.764						
id2		.746						
id9		.734						
id12		.733						
id10		.708						
id11		.693						
id11		.660						
ib7		.611						
id8		.593						
id7		.554						
ic11		.486						
id6		.440						
ic2		.418						
ic7								
gd11			.829					
gd9			.827					
gd1			.826					
gd4			.816					
gd2			.816					
gd6			.809					
gd13			.807					
gd14			.794					
gd5			.780					
gd10			.764					
gd3			.753					
gd12			.737					
gd8			.701					
gd15			.662					
gd7			.530					
ib1				.774				
ib8				.762				
ib6				.745				
ib11				.665				
ic8				.648				
ic5				.592				
ic12				.576				
ib3				.556				
ib4				.543				
								.435

ib2				.539				
ic1								
ic10								
ib9								
ia4					.842			
ia15					.830			
ia9					.795			
ia8					.765			
ia3					.758			
ia5					.757			
ia16					.734			
ia7					.702			
ia6					.697			
ia11					.583			
ia10					.539			
ia13					.501			
ia12					.491			
ia14					.464			
ia2					.463		-.430	
ga6						.792		
ga14						.763		
ga13						.747		
ga2						.727		
ga10						.705		
ga7						.687		
ga8						.656		
ga3						.615		
ga11						.610		
ga12						.594		
ga5						.579		
ga9						.561		
ga1						.561	-.437	
ga4						.493		
ia1							-.570	
ic6							-.483	
ic9								
gb2								-.814
gb10								-.787
gb4								-.786
gb9								-.773
gb6								-.729
gb1								-.720
ib10								-.648
gb8								-.640
gb5								-.609
gb3								-.594
gb7								-.554
ib5								-.548
ic3								-.546
ic4								

APPENDIX J
FACTOR ANALYSIS OF INDEBTEDNESS COGNITIONS AND
BEHAVIOR ITEMS

	Factor	
	IC	IB
ic3	.871	
ic6	.821	
ib10	.779	
ic7	.755	
ic4	.753	
ib5	.707	
ic2	.695	
ic9	.663	
ic1	.634	
ic10	.517	
ib7	.499	
ib2	.417	
ic11		
ib8		.795
ib6		.768
ib3		.726
ib1		.682
ic12		.673
ib11		.618
ic8		.527
ic5	.444	.457
ib9		.432
ib4		

APPENDIX K

ANTECEDENTS AND OTHER CONSTRUCTS MEASURED IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 2

Benevolent intentions (Lee et al. 2004)

1. The mechanic “was concerned with my welfare”
2. The mechanic’s “concern is truly genuine”
3. The mechanic “helped and didn’t expect anything in return”
4. The mechanic was looking out for my best interests (added)

Mutualistic Benevolence / Mutual intentions (Lee et al 2004.)

1. The mechanic “helped because it was mutually beneficial for him and me”
2. The mechanic “offered support because he thought it would be beneficial for both parties”
3. The mechanic “helped because he gained as well as me”

Comfort: The mechanic...

1. Comforted me
2. Put me at ease
3. Made me feel relaxed
4. Took my worries away
5. Calmed my fears

Vulnerability: The mechanic made me feel...

1. Exposed
2. Insecure
3. Vulnerable
4. Uncertain
5. Uneasy
6. Unprotected

Customization (Bello and Gilliland 1997; Lusch and Brown 1996; Pounders 2010)

1. The mechanic “was flexible in response to my requests”
2. The mechanic “modified his service based on my needs”
3. The mechanic “was willing to accommodate an unexpected situation”
4. The mechanic “was flexible in dealing with me”
5. The mechanic “made adjustments to cope with changing circumstances”
6. The mechanic “worked with my when an unexpected situation arose”

Extra-role behavior (Maxham and Netemeyer 2003)

1. The mechanic “went out of his way” by exhibiting manners that were reasonable to his role
2. The mechanic appropriately “went above and beyond the call of duty”
3. The mechanic reasonably “went out of his way to help me”
4. The mechanic performed extra behaviors that were suitable to his role
5. The mechanic I dealt with engaged in extra behaviors that were fitting to his job

6. The mechanic “went out of his way” just the right amount

Mechanic Norm Violation – Exchange (modified Extra-Role Behavior)(Maxham and Netemeyer 2003)

1. The mechanic exhibited manners that were unreasonable to his role
2. The mechanic inappropriately “went above and beyond the call of duty”
3. The mechanic excessively “went out of his way” to help me
4. The mechanic performed extra behaviors that were unsuitable to his role
5. The mechanic “I dealt with” engaged in behaviors that were inappropriate to his job
6. The mechanic “went out of his way” too much

Consumer Norm Violation

1. I feel like I didn’t fulfill my role
2. I feel as if I might have done something wrong
3. I feel as though I put very little effort into the situation
4. I feel as though I was unable to return the favor
5. I feel as though I violated an expectation

Pride (Aaker and Williams 1998)

1. “I feel proud”
2. “I feel pride”
3. “I feel like I did something right”
4. “I feel self-confident”

Happiness (Richins 1997)

1. “Happy”
2. “Pleased”
3. “Joyful”

APPENDIX L
TESTS OF DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY FOR THE GRATITUDE MEASUREMENT MODEL IN ESSAY
TWO STUDY 3

	AVE	Gratitude	Benevolent Intentions	Customization	Extra Role Behavior	Pride	Happiness	Comfort
GA	.60							
GB	.71							
GC	.68							
Gratitude	.52							
Benevolent Intentions	.66	.79						
Customization	.75	.59	.53					
Extra-Role Behavior	.52	.35	.32	.27				
Pride	.65	.11	.05	.03	.04			
Happiness	.77	.74	.46	.46	.28	.09		
Comfort	.68	.51	.40	.36	.28	.14	.54	
Vulnerability	.66	.34	.25	.24	.22	.01	.31	.40

APPENDIX M **CORRELATIONS OF CONSTRUCTS IN THE GRATITUDE** **MEASUREMENT MODEL IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 3**

			Estimate
benevolent	<-->	customization	.726
benevolent	<-->	comfort	.631
customization	<-->	comfort	.599
benevolent	<-->	Gratitude	.889
benevolent	<-->	Extra_Role	.562
benevolent	<-->	Happiness	.681
benevolent	<-->	Pride	.228
customization	<-->	Gratitude	.769
customization	<-->	Extra_Role	.516
customization	<-->	Happiness	.676
customization	<-->	Pride	.163
comfort	<-->	Gratitude	.713
comfort	<-->	Extra_Role	.529
comfort	<-->	Happiness	.735
comfort	<-->	Pride	.380
Gratitude	<-->	Extra_Role	.594
Gratitude	<-->	Happiness	.858
Gratitude	<-->	Pride	.332
Extra_Role	<-->	Happiness	.533
Extra_Role	<-->	Pride	.203
Happiness	<-->	Pride	.292
benevolent	<-->	Vulnerability	-.502
customization	<-->	Vulnerability	-.494
comfort	<-->	Vulnerability	-.630
Gratitude	<-->	Vulnerability	-.583
Extra_Role	<-->	Vulnerability	-.468
Happiness	<-->	Vulnerability	-.553
Pride	<-->	Vulnerability	-.115

APPENDIX N
TESTS OF DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY FOR THE INDEBTEDNESS MEASUREMENT MODEL IN
ESSAY TWO STUDY 3

	AVE	Mutual Intentions	Customer Norm Violation	Excessive Role Behavior	Comfort	Vulnerability	IA	IB	IC
Mutual intentions	.65								
Customer Norm Violation	.68	.00							
Excessive Role Behavior	.58	.03	.42						
Comfort	.68	.03	.08	.12					
Vulnerability	.67	.02	.34	.34	.40				
IA	.57	.00	.19	.22	.16	.25			
IB	.53	.02	.03	.02	.02	.08	.03		
IC	.60	.00	.26	.09	.00	.04	.07	.04	
ID	.68	.00	.07	.04	.00	.02	.05	.00	.09

APPENDIX O
CORRELATIONS OF CONSTRUCTS IN THE INDEBTEDNESS
MEASUREMENT MODEL IN ESSAY TWO STUDY 3

			Estimate
ei	<-->	cnv	-.075
nrrer	<-->	vulnear	.582
nrrer	<-->	ei	-.164
nrrer	<-->	cnv	.650
nrrer	<-->	comfort	-.342
nrrer	<-->	ia	.465
nrrer	<-->	id	.203
nrrer	<-->	ib	.127
nrrer	<-->	ic	.293
vulnear	<-->	ei	-.125
vulnear	<-->	cnv	.581
vulnear	<-->	comfort	-.629
vulnear	<-->	ia	.498
vulnear	<-->	id	.139
vulnear	<-->	ib	.276
vulnear	<-->	ic	.203
ei	<-->	comfort	.184
ei	<-->	ia	-.075
ei	<-->	id	.051
ei	<-->	ib	.152
ei	<-->	ic	.084
cnv	<-->	comfort	-.285
cnv	<-->	ia	.444
cnv	<-->	id	.273
cnv	<-->	ib	.174
cnv	<-->	ic	.505
comfort	<-->	ia	-.397
comfort	<-->	id	-.025
comfort	<-->	ib	-.137
comfort	<-->	ic	.088
ia	<-->	id	.214
ia	<-->	ib	.159
ia	<-->	ic	.267
id	<-->	ib	.018
id	<-->	ic	.300
ib	<-->	ic	.204

APPENDIX P
CORRELATIONS FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 1 GRATITUDE
MEASUREMENT MODEL

			Estimate
benevolent	<-->	customization	.726
benevolent	<-->	extra_role	.563
customization	<-->	extra_role	.516
benevolent	<-->	advocate	.671
benevolent	<-->	pref.treat	.617
benevolent	<-->	gratitude	.887
customization	<-->	advocate	.706
customization	<-->	pref.treat	.609
customization	<-->	gratitude	.768
extra_role	<-->	advocate	.482
extra_role	<-->	pref.treat	.430
extra_role	<-->	gratitude	.593
advocate	<-->	pref.treat	.764
advocate	<-->	gratitude	.795
pref.treat	<-->	gratitude	.749
benevolent	<-->	satisfaction	.490
customization	<-->	satisfaction	.563
extra_role	<-->	satisfaction	.384
advocate	<-->	satisfaction	.610
satisfaction	<-->	pref.treat	.575
satisfaction	<-->	gratitude	.588

APPENDIX Q **CORRELATIONS FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 1 INDEBTEDNESS** **MEASUREMENT MODEL**

			Estimate
ei	<-->	cnv	-.072
excessive.extra.role	<-->	ei	-.162
excessive.extra.role	<-->	cnv	.648
excessive.extra.role	<-->	ia	.464
excessive.extra.role	<-->	id	.202
excessive.extra.role	<-->	ib	.124
excessive.extra.role	<-->	ic	.292
ei	<-->	ia	-.076
ei	<-->	id	.049
ei	<-->	ib	.151
ei	<-->	ic	.085
cnv	<-->	ia	.446
cnv	<-->	id	.277
cnv	<-->	ib	.171
cnv	<-->	ic	.509
ia	<-->	id	.215
ia	<-->	ib	.159
ia	<-->	ic	.267
id	<-->	ib	.017
id	<-->	ic	.300
ib	<-->	ic	.204
excessive.extra.role	<-->	satisfaction	-.312
excessive.extra.role	<-->	word_of_mouth	-.362
excessive.extra.role	<-->	preferential_treatment	-.306
ei	<-->	satisfaction	.181
ei	<-->	word_of_mouth	.234
ei	<-->	preferential_treatment	.207
cnv	<-->	satisfaction	-.107
cnv	<-->	word_of_mouth	-.252
cnv	<-->	preferential_treatment	-.153
ia	<-->	satisfaction	-.230
ia	<-->	word_of_mouth	-.381
ia	<-->	preferential_treatment	-.343
id	<-->	satisfaction	.052
id	<-->	word_of_mouth	-.002
id	<-->	preferential_treatment	-.099
ib	<-->	satisfaction	-.033
ib	<-->	word_of_mouth	-.124
ib	<-->	preferential_treatment	-.208
ic	<-->	satisfaction	.178
ic	<-->	word_of_mouth	.084
ic	<-->	preferential_treatment	.063
satisfaction	<-->	word_of_mouth	.608

			Estimate
satisfaction	<-->	preferential_treatment	.573
word_of_mouth	<-->	preferential_treatment	.764

APPENDIX R **STANDARDIZED PATH ESTIMATES FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 1** **INDEBTEDNESS STRUCTURAL MODEL**

		Estimate
ib	<--- cnv	.159
ic	<--- cnv	.564
ia	<--- cnv	.265
ia	<--- excessive.extra.role	.325
ic	<--- excessive.extra.role	-.066
ib	<--- excessive.extra.role	.069
ib	<--- ei	.159
ic	<--- ei	.138
ia	<--- ei	-.029
id	<--- excessive.extra.role	.040
id	<--- cnv	.273
id	<--- ei	.079
sat	<--- ia	-.376
preftreat	<--- ia	-.437
adv	<--- ia	-.510
preftreat	<--- ic	.284
sat	<--- ic	.316
adv	<--- ic	.272
preftreat	<--- ib	-.221
sat	<--- ib	-.071
adv	<--- ib	-.141
preftreat	<--- id	-.080
sat	<--- id	.040
adv	<--- id	.024
iaconstrained	<--- ia	.827
iahead	<--- ia	.707
iatense	<--- ia	.626
iabothered	<--- ia	.726
iatrapped	<--- ia	.820
iahandstied	<--- ia	.757
ib6	<--- ib	.801
ib4	<--- ib	.805
ib3	<--- ib	.664
ib2	<--- ib	.629
ic6	<--- ic	.811
ic5	<--- ic	.821
ic31	<--- ic	.618
ic3	<--- ic	.861
ic2	<--- ic	.739
NV_ER5	<--- excessive.extra.role	.700
NV_ER6	<--- excessive.extra.role	.711
EI1	<--- ei	.798
EI2	<--- ei	.793
EI3	<--- ei	.825
adv1	<--- adv	.908
adv2	<--- adv	.967
adv3	<--- adv	.947
sat1	<--- sat	.780

			Estimate
sat2	<---	sat	.914
sat3	<---	sat	.879
pt1	<---	preftreat	.943
pt2	<---	preftreat	.971
pt3	<---	preftreat	.918
pt4	<---	preftreat	.945
CNV5	<---	cnv	.849
CNV2	<---	cnv	.843
CNV1	<---	cnv	.774
id1	<---	id	.845
id2	<---	id	.791
id3	<---	id	.828
id4	<---	id	.855
id5	<---	id	.729
id6	<---	id	.874
NV_ER2	<---	excessive.extra.role	.861

APPENDIX S

MEDIATION RESULTS FOR ESSAY THREE STUDY 2

Indirect Effect Analyzes for Customization on Loyalty, Word-of-Mouth, and Preferential Treatment

Model: Mediation of Customization on Loyalty, PWOM, and PT	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Customization → Gratitude	0.604	0.734	
Customization → Loyalty	0.2	0.152	0.102
Customization → Word-of-mouth	0.237	0.3197	0.006
Customization → Preferential Treatment	0.293	0.236	
Gratitude → Loyalty	0.738	0.463	
Gratitude → Word-of-mouth	0.64	0.437	
Gratitude → Preferential Treatment	-0.064	-0.042	0.574

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	610.32 (365)
CFI	0.973
RMSEA	0.046

	Loyalty	Preferential Treatment	Word-of-Mouth
Mean Indirect Effect	0.339	0.313	0.463
95% Confidence Interval	.157 - .581	.136 - .551	.317 - .717
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.002	0.002	0.001
Mediation Type	Indirect Only (Full Mediation)	Complementary Mediation (Partial Mediation)	Complementary Mediation (Partial Mediation)

Indirect Effect Analyzes for Benevolent Intentions on Loyalty and Preferential Treatment

Model: Mediation of Benevolent Intentions on Loyalty	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Benevolent Intentions → Gratitude	0.653	0.875	***
Benevolent Intentions → Loyalty	0.479	0.379	0.019
Gratitude → Loyalty	0.379	0.224	0.168

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	316.58 (164)
CFI	0.97
RMSEA	0.05

	Loyalty
Mean Indirect Effect	0.196
95% Confidence Interval	-0.131 - .553
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.25
Mediation Type	Direct Effect Only

Model: Mediation of Benevolent Intentions on PT	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Benevolent Intentions → Gratitude	0.656	0.873	***
Benevolent Intentions → Preferential Treatment	0.241	0.194	0.235
Gratitude → Preferential Treatment	0.534	0.323	0.05

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	371.17 (203)
CFI	0.97
RMSEA	0.05

	Preferential Treatment
Mean Indirect Effect	0.451
95% Confidence Interval	.335 - .565
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.002
Mediation Type	Indirect Only (Full Mediation)

Indirect Effect Analyzes for Extra Role Behavior on Loyalty, Word-of-Mouth and Preferential Treatment

Model: Mediation of Extra-Role Behavior on Loyalty	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Extra Role Behavior → Gratitude	0.512	0.781	***
Extra Role Behavior → Loyalty	0.048	0.044	0.708
Gratitude → Loyalty	0.916	0.551	***

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	.299.72 (164)
CFI	0.97
RMSEA	0.05

	Loyalty
Mean Indirect Effect	0.43
95% Confidence Interval	.214-.790
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.001
Mediation Type	Indirect Only (Full Mediation)

Model: Mediation of Extra-Role Behavior on PWOM	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Extra Role Behavior → Gratitude	0.51	0.776	***
Extra Role Behavior → Word-of-Mouth	0.132	0.137	0.168
Gratitude → Word-of-Mouth	0.947	0.647	***

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	351.37 (203)
CFI	0.98
RMSEA	0.05

	Word-of-Mouth
Mean Indirect Effect	0.502
95% Confidence Interval	.292-.796
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.002
Mediation Type	Indirect Only (Full Mediation)

Model: Mediation of Extra-Role Behavior on PT	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Extra Role Behavior → Gratitude	0.511	0.777	***
Extra Role Behavior → Preferential Treatment	0.023	0.023	0.844
Gratitude → Preferential Treatment	0.75	0.498	***

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	.372.00 (203)
CFI	0.97
RMSEA	0.05

	Preferential Treatment
Mean Indirect Effect	0.387
95% Confidence Interval	.167-.729
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.002
Mediation Type	Indirect Only (Full Mediation)

Indirect Effect Analyses for Excessive Customization on Loyalty, Word-of-Mouth and Preferential Treatment

Model: Mediation of Excessive Customization on Loyalty, PWOM and PT	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Excessive Customization → Indebtedness	0.308	0.491	***
Excessive Customization → Loyalty	0.005	-0.004	0.955
Excessive Customization → Word-of-mouth	-0.058	-0.055	0.355
Excessive Customization → Preferential Treatment	-0.013	-0.012	0.809
Indebtedness → Loyalty	-0.318	-0.173	0.071
Indebtedness → Word-of-mouth	-0.516	-0.306	***
Indebtedness → Preferential Treatment	-0.315	-0.181	0.005

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	700.11 (482)
CFI	0.973
RMSEA	0.038

	Loyalty	Preferential Treatment	Word-of-Mouth
Mean Indirect Effect	-0.085	-0.157	-0.202
95% Confidence Interval	-0.214 - .006	-0.304 - -.046	-0.364 - -.1
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.123	0.009	0.002
Mediation Type	No Effect	Indirect Only (Full Mediation)	Indirect Only (Full Mediation)

Indirect Effect Analyses for Mutual Intentions on Loyalty, Word-of-Mouth and Preferential Treatment

Model: Mediation of Mutual Intentions on Loyalty, PWOM and PT	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Mutual Intentions → Indebtedness	0.107	0.248	0.002
Mutual Intentions → Loyalty	0.137	0.169	0.009
Mutual Intentions → Word-of-mouth	0.014	0.019	0.705
Mutual Intentions → Preferential Treatment	0.048	0.062	0.149
Indebtedness → Loyalty	-0.42	-0.224	0.008
Indebtedness → Word-of-mouth	-0.591	-0.343	***
Indebtedness → Preferential Treatment	-0.37	-0.209	***

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	671.89 (451)
CFI	0.972
RMSEA	0.039

	Loyalty	Preferential Treatment	Word of Mouth
Mean Indirect Effect	-0.056	0.034	-0.02
95% Confidence Interval	-0.166 - -.007	-0.093 - 0.174	-0.155 – 0.115
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.026	0.509	0.792
Mediation Type	Competitive Mediation	No Effect	No Effect

Indirect Effect Analyses for Consumer Norm Violation on Loyalty, Word-of-Mouth and Preferential Treatment

Model: Mediation of Consumer Norm Violation on Loyalty, PWOM and PT	Unstandardized Path Estimates	Standardized Path Estimates	P-Value
Consumer Norm Violation → Indebtedness	0.421	0.605	***
Consumer Norm Violation → Loyalty	0.03	0.025	0.786
Consumer Norm Violation → Word-of-mouth	-0.103	-0.091	0.184
Consumer Norm Violation → Preferential Treatment	-0.006	-0.005	0.932
Indebtedness → Loyalty	-0.348	-0.196	0.074
Indebtedness → Word-of-mouth	-0.452	-0.278	0.002
Indebtedness → Preferential Treatment	-0.306	-0.183	0.012

Model Fit Statistics

χ^2 (df)	729.37 (482)
CFI	0.97
RMSEA	0.04

	Loyalty	Preferential Treatment	Word of Mouth
Mean Indirect Effect	-0.119	-0.182	-0.223
95% Confidence Interval	-0.413 - .038	-0.509 - -.024	-0.582 - -.038
Two-Tailed Significance of Indirect Effect	0.151	0.018	0.013
Mediation Type	No Effect	Indirect Only (Mediation)	Indirect Only (Mediation)

VITA

Dora E. Schmit received her Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. After graduating, Dora worked for Marshall Field's which was acquired by Macy's during her time there, and Menard's Inc. She then decided to pursue the Ph.D. program at Louisiana State University and moved to Baton Rouge in August, 2008. In August, 2012, she earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in business administration (marketing). She then began her career in academia as an assistant professor of marketing at Georgia Southern University. She enjoys researching several areas of marketing, but her research primarily focuses on customer emotions and relationship marketing. Her research has been presented at several marketing conferences, including the Society for Marketing Advances, the Academy of Marketing Science and the Society for Consumer Psychology.